THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

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THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

By ELMER R. GREGOR

Western Indian Series

WHITE OTTER
THE WAR TRAIL
THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

Eastern Indian Series

SPOTTED DEER
RUNNING FOX
THE WHITE WOLF

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HE SHOT HIS ARROW

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BY

ELMER RUSSELL GREGOR

AUTHOR OF "THE WAR TRAIL,"
"SPOTTED DEER," "THE WHITE WOLF,"
"RUNNING FOX," "WHITE OTTER," ETC.

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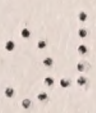

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THREE SIOUX SCOUTS

CHAPTER I

WATCHING FOR BUFFALOES

WHITE OTTER, the famous young war chief of the Ogalala Sioux, and his friends Sun Bird and Little Raven, of the Minneconjoux tribe, were searching the plains for buffaloes. It was early spring, the time of The-new-grass-moon, and the Sioux were expecting the great buffalo herds on their migration northward from the winter feeding grounds.

"Pretty soon Ta-tan-ka will come—then we will have some good days and plenty of meat," White Otter told his friends. "Yellow Horse is singing the Medicine Songs to bring the buffaloes. They will come."

"My father does that," said Sun Bird. "I have seen him do it many times."

"Your father is a great Medicine Person, like Yellow Horse," declared White Otter.

Although the villages of the Ogalalas and the Minneconjoux were many days' travel apart, the

young warriors visited one another with considerable frequency. The year previous White Otter had accompanied the Minneconjoux on a great war expedition against the Blackfeet. Now Sun Bird and his brother, Little Raven, had come to the Ogalala village to participate in the spring buffalo hunt.

The three young scouts made an impressive appearance as they cantered across the plain on their speedy little hunting ponies. White Otter was tall and lithe. Sun Bird was considerably shorter, and heavier in physique. Little Raven was younger and less matured in face and stature. All showed the characteristics of the Dacotah warrior. They were fearless, cautious and crafty. Each had proved his courage and skill in a number of thrilling exploits, and despite their youthfulness all three were famous warriors. They wore the simple dress of the hunter, which consisted of moccasins, and buckskin leggins reaching to the thighs. They were naked above the waist. Their hair was worn in two braids wrapped with fur. White Otter and Sun Bird, as chiefs of their respective tribes, were entitled to wear the coveted war bonnet of eagle plumes. Both had left it off to be as inconspicuous as possible in their

search for game. White Otter, however, wore a single eagle feather in his scalp lock. They were armed with bows and arrows and flint hunting knives. White Otter and Sun Bird carried fire sticks. Each was provided with a robe of elkskin which was folded beneath him, across the back of his pony.

For two days they had searched the plains to the southward of the Ogalala camp. They had seen nothing, however, to indicate the approach of the great buffalo herds. Still they felt certain that it would be only a day or so until the buffaloes appeared.

"When we see them we will ride fast and tell my people," said White Otter.

"Yes, yes, we will be the first to tell about it," Little Raven declared, enthusiastically.

They were a considerable distance from the Ogalala village, and as the third day drew toward its close they began to wonder if it might not be foolhardy to venture farther to the southward. They knew that there was a possibility of encountering both the Kiowas and the Pawnees in that direction, and the Utes from the west and even their hated foes, the Crows, sometimes moved down into that disputed territory. The Sioux

realized, therefore, that they were exposing themselves to considerable danger.

"We have come a long ways—we must watch out," White Otter cautioned.

"It is true," agreed Sun Bird. "The Pawnees travel in this country. Perhaps they are looking around for buffaloes. We must be cautious."

They had stopped at a little grove of cottonwoods, which offered feed and water for the ponies. As the day had almost ended, they were tempted to spend the night at that spot. White Otter, however, decided against it.

"It would be foolish," he declared. "Our enemies know about this place. Perhaps they will come here when it gets dark. We must ride away."

"It is the best thing to do," said Sun Bird.

They loitered until the ponies had finished feeding, and then they prepared to ride away. At that moment a small band of antelopes suddenly appeared on the crest of a low ridge to the westward. They had stopped, and seemed to be watching something on the other side of the ridge. It was evident that they had been alarmed. The Sioux became suspicious. They watched closely.

"Something has frightened Ta-to-ka-dan," said Sun Bird.

"See, they are running down the ridge," Little Raven whispered, excitedly.

The antelopes were bounding down the slope. When they reached the bottom they turned toward the little grove in which the Sioux had taken shelter. The latter watched them with considerable uneasiness.

"It is bad," declared White Otter. "Perhaps some one is peeping over that hill. If those antelopes come close they will find out about us. Then they will run away. If hunters are watching on that ridge they will know that something is over here in this place. Perhaps they will come here to find out about it."

"It is bad," said Sun Bird.

The antelopes were still running toward the grove. Several old bucks, however, had stopped to look back at the ridge. The rest of the band continued across the plain. They were running against the wind. As they came within arrow range of the grove they suddenly stopped, and appeared suspicious. They had caught the danger scent.

"Ta-to-ka-dan is sharp," laughed Sun Bird.

"The wind has told about us," said Little Raven.

White Otter kept silent. He watched the antelopes with grave misgivings. Their behavior alarmed him. He felt quite sure that they would arouse the distrust of any foes who might be loitering within sight, and tempt them to investigate the grove. The idea suggested disturbing possibilities.

"See, Ta-to-ka-dan is standing out there like a frightened old woman," he said, irritably. "If our enemies are about they will come over here to see what has frightend Ta-to-ka-dan."

"Come, we will ride away," proposed Little Raven.

"Wait, wait," Sun Bird cried, excitedly. "I saw something peep over the top of that hill."

"I see it," said Little Raven. "It looks like Ma-ya-sh, the wolf."

They saw what appeared to be the head of a prairie wolf rising cautiously above the top of the ridge. The buck antelopes had discovered it, and were flashing the danger signal and stamping nervously.

"It is bad," White Otter said, uneasily. "Per-

haps it is Ma-ya-sh, the wolf—perhaps it is a hunter. We must watch sharp."

As they continued to watch the ridge, the little band of antelopes suddenly turned and bounded away toward the north. It was evident that they had determined to avoid the grove. In a few moments the bucks that had been watching the ridge cantered after them.

"It is good," said White Otter. "Now we will find out who is over there on that hill. If it is Ma-ya-sh and his people they will go away. If it is our enemies they will keep watching this place."

"Something is watching," Sun Bird told him.

The head of the mysterious prowler still showed above the ridge. It was boldly outlined against the fading sunset sky. It appeared to be the head of Ma-ya-sh, the prairie wolf. The Sioux distinctly saw the long, lean snout, and the pointed ears of Ma-ya-sh. Still they were suspicious. They knew that scouts often covered themselves with the skin of Ma-ya-sh to creep up on game, and also to spy upon their foes without arousing distrust.

"I do not believe it is Ma-ya-sh," White Otter declared, finally. "It keeps too still. Ma-ya-sh

would move around. I believe it is a hunter."

"We will watch," said Sun Bird.

"Look, look, there is another!" cried Little Raven.

A second head had suddenly appeared. It, too, seemed to be the head of a prairie wolf. The Sioux, however, were doubtful. If the distant objects really were wolves, their actions were most unusual. They were careful to keep themselves well concealed behind the ridge, and as the antelopes were a considerable distance to the northward, it was evident that the mysterious creatures were watching the grove. The Sioux were concealed in the timber, and there was no possibility of being seen. They determined to watch, therefore, until the strange objects on the ridge either showed themselves or disappeared. In a few moments one withdrew from sight.

"That is bad," said White Otter. "Now I believe they are scouts. Perhaps one has gone away to call the hunters. We must watch out."

Daylight was fading. Twilight was settling upon the plain. The Sioux found it difficult to distinguish the remaining object on the ridge. They felt considerably relieved to know that night was close at hand.

"Pretty soon it will be dark," said White Otter. "Then we will ride away."

They waited impatiently for nightfall. Their one fear was that a company of foes might ride toward the grove before darkness made it possible to withdraw without being seen. They had little fear of being caught, but they were anxious to avoid being discovered. Once seen, they realized that it might be perilous to loiter in the vicinity, and they were eager to remain until they found the buffalo herd. They watched closely until night finally came. Then they mounted their ponies and rode from the grove.

"Well, White Otter, how do you feel about it?" Little Raven inquired, as they rode cautiously toward the east.

"I believe we are in danger," White Otter told him.

They continued across the plain until they came to a shallow ravine, which they had passed on their way to the grove. White Otter advised stopping there until daylight.

"This is a good place," he said. "We will wait here and listen."

They picketed the ponies in the bottom of the gully, and then they crawled to the plain to watch

and listen. It was a long time before they heard anything to arouse their suspicions. Then they heard the dreary wail of a prairie wolf, in the direction of the grove. Although it sounded natural, the Sioux distrusted it. Twice it rose shrilly through the night, and then it ceased. They were almost certain that it had been a signal. They listened anxiously for an answer from the ridge. The silence, however, continued.

"I believe it was a scout," said White Otter. "Perhaps he was calling his people."

"Perhaps we will hear the ponies," suggested Little Raven.

"We are too far off," White Otter told him. "Those people will ride easy."

"Perhaps it was only Ma-ya-sh," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps he went there to drink."

"Yes, it may be true, but I believe it was some one different," replied White Otter. "We are in the country of our enemies. We must be sharp."

CHAPTER II

MYSTERIOUS SIGNALS

FEARFUL that a company of foes might have taken shelter in the little grove of cottonwoods, the Sioux determined to take every precaution against a sudden attack. While Little Raven remained in the ravine with the ponies, White Otter and Sun Bird seated themselves upon the plain to listen for sounds from the grove. All was still. They began to wonder if they had been needlessly alarmed. At that moment one of the ponies whinnied softly. White Otter and Sun Bird scrambled wildly into the gully. Little Raven had already seized the pony and turned its head out of the wind. The other ponies also seemed restless and nervous, and White Otter and Sun Bird attempted to quiet them.

"It is bad," White Otter said, softly. "I believe some one is riding this way."

The thought was startling. The Sioux stood beside their ponies, listening uneasily. One question flashed through the mind of each of them.

Were enemies approaching stealthily under cover of the darkness? They heard nothing to give them a clew. Many moments passed. The silence increased their suspense. They believed they were in peril. It seemed folly to loiter in the ravine.

"Come, we will go," whispered White Otter.

They mounted the ponies and rode from the ravine. Once on the plain, they stopped for a moment to listen. Then the pony again attempted to call, but Little Raven silenced it with his riding quirt. The warning was significant. The Sioux believed that strange horses were close at hand. They turned their ponies and rode silently away into the night. It was some time before they ventured to speak.

"Well, my brothers, I believe Ma-ya-sh came to find us," White Otter laughed, softly, when they were beyond earshot of the ravine.

"Yes, White Otter, I believe your words were true; I believe scouts were peeping over that ridge," Sun Bird told him.

"Do you believe they saw us?" Little Raven asked, anxiously.

"No," replied White Otter. "Perhaps they found out about our ponies."

Although they realized that it might be perilous to linger in the vicinity, the Sioux determined to remain within sight of the grove until they learned if their suspicions were real. When they reached a low ridge, a considerable distance to the eastward, they decided to stop and wait for daylight.

"See, pretty soon it will be light," said Sun Bird. "Then we will find out if there is any one over there in that place."

When the night shadows finally lifted from the plain, White Otter and Sun Bird concealed themselves below the crest of the ridge to watch, while Little Raven waited at the base of the slope with the ponies. The grove was in plain sight, and the Sioux watched expectantly.

"If there are hunters over there, pretty soon they will ride out to look for buffaloes," said Sun Bird.

"Perhaps they are watching," White Otter reminded him.

A few moments later they saw two horsemen ride from the grove, and turn toward the ravine. They rode across the plain at an easy canter, and showed little caution. As they drew near the ravine, however, they became more careful. Once within arrow range, they stopped, and it was

apparent that they were watching the top of the gully. Then they rode slowly forward.

"Those are the scouts that peeped over that hill," declared White Otter. "I believe they are trying to find out about us."

The horsemen had disappeared into the ravine. The Sioux had been unable to identify them. They felt certain that the strangers would soon find the pony tracks. The idea alarmed them.

"Perhaps they will follow us," suggested Sun Bird.

"Watch," said White Otter.

The horsemen had suddenly appeared. They had crossed the ravine, and were riding slowly over the plain. The Sioux knew at once that they were looking for pony tracks. It was not long before they found them. They followed the trail a bowshot or more, and then they stopped. They were looking directly toward the ridge. The Sioux watched them in breathless suspense. They were straining their eyes to identify them, but the distance made it impossible.

"I cannot tell who they are," declared White Otter. "Can you tell about it?"

"No; they are too far away," Sun Bird told him. "Perhaps they will come closer."

"I believe they are talking about it," said White Otter.

At that moment the horsemen turned their ponies, and galloped off toward the west. They crossed the ravine, and rode toward the grove. They passed it, however, and continued toward the ridge farther to the westward. It was not long before they disappeared.

"It is bad," declared White Otter. "Now we do not know who they are."

"Well, we know that our enemies are in this place," Sun Bird told him. "Now it will be useless to look for the buffaloes. If Ta-tan-ka comes, those scouts will tell their people about it. Yes, I believe they are looking for buffaloes."

"My brother, I feel different about it," said White Otter. "Perhaps those scouts are with a war party. Perhaps they are Pawnees. Perhaps they are going to fight my people. I must find out about it."

Sun Bird remained silent. It was not the part of a warrior to ask questions. He waited for White Otter to explain his plans.

"Now I will tell you what I propose to do," White Otter told him. "We must stay here and watch. Perhaps those scouts are trying to fool

us. Perhaps they are trying to make us believe they have gone away. I believe they are peeping over that hill."

"Well, they will not catch us," laughed Sun Bird.

While White Otter continued to watch, Sun Bird crept down the slope to tell Little Raven about the two mysterious horsemen. The ridge to the westward was far away, and White Otter knew that it would be impossible to discover any one who might be hiding there. He had little doubt that at least one of the unknown riders had stopped to watch the plain.

"Did you see anything?" Sun Bird inquired anxiously, when he returned.

"No, I did not see anything, but I believe some one is watching over there on that hill," White Otter told him.

"Then we must be cautious," said Sun Bird.

They watched until the day was half gone, and then, having seen nothing to indicate that foes were loitering in the vicinity, they began to feel somewhat reassured. They wondered if the two horsemen might not have been stray hunters who had been led to the grove by the antelopes. Having found the fresh pony tracks, they might have

feared to loiter in the locality. In spite of the possibility, however, the Sioux resolved to take no chances.

"We will keep watching," declared White Otter.

Soon afterward their patience was rewarded when they saw what appeared to be a cloud of dust or smoke rising behind the distant ridge. They watched it with great interest. For some time it puzzled them. It was faint and indistinct, and they wondered if it was dust raised by the hoofs of buffaloes or ponies. Then they noted that it seemed to rise intermittently in puffs, and continued in one particular spot.

"So-ta, smoke," White Otter said, finally.

"Yes, yes, it is smoke," agreed Sun Bird.

"Those scouts are calling their people," declared White Otter. "I believe it is a war party."

"We will see," said Sun Bird.

In a short time the smoke faded from the sky. The Sioux felt sure that the signal had been seen by those for whom it was intended. They had little doubt that a company of horsemen were riding across the plain on the other side of the ridge.

"It is bad," said White Otter. "Those scouts found pony tracks at the place where the trees grow. They followed them to that gully. They found them coming this way. Then they were afraid, and went to call their people. I believe they will try to find out about us."

"Well, my brother, they are a long ways off," Sun Bird reminded him. "We can keep away from them."

"We must stay here and watch," declared White Otter. Perhaps it is a big war party of Pawnees. Perhaps they are going to fight my people. I believe something bad will come of it."

"We will keep watching until we find out about it," Sun Bird assured him.

As time passed and they saw nothing more, White Otter became uneasy. A disquieting possibility had suddenly presented itself to his mind. It filled him with distrust, and awakened fears for the safety of his people.

"I do not like this thing," he told Sun Bird. "That ridge goes a long ways. We cannot see over it. Perhaps a war party is riding along behind that hill. Perhaps they are going to the lodges of my people. I would like to look over that hill, and find out about it."

"You must not try to do that," Sun Bird cautioned him. "It would be foolish. I believe scouts are watching over there. If we show ourselves they will come after us."

White Otter remained silent. He was worried and perplexed. He believed that what Sun Bird had said was true. Still he knew that if a war party of foes was moving against the Ogalala camp it was his duty to learn of it, and carry a warning to his people. For the moment, however, he saw no way of accomplishing it. The ridge from which he was watching was parallel with the ridge to the westward, and there was a wide expanse of open plain between them. To reach the other ridge it would be necessary to ride out in full sight of any foes who might be watching from concealment. White Otter realized that such a maneuver would be foolhardy. He decided that it would be impossible to do anything before nightfall.

"Yes, my brother, I see that what you say is true," he said, finally. "The lodges of my people are three sun's travel away. It is a long ways. A war party travels slow so that the ponies will be fresh when the fight begins. There is only one thing to do. We must keep watching until

it gets dark. Then we will ride over that hill, and try to find out about those people."

"I believe it is the best thing to do," said Sun Bird.

Late in the day, however, they saw something which convinced them that the two horsemen had been part of a clever stratagem to deceive any one who had been watching. An eagle suddenly appeared high over the plain, and flew toward the grove of cottonwoods. It was evident that the bird intended to alight in the timber. The Sioux watched closely. Once above the grove, the eagle set its wings and dropped toward the trees. Then, as it got nearer, it rose and circled far out over the plain. The Sioux were quick to understand the significance of the maneuver.

"Hi, Hu-ya saw something down there among the trees," White Otter cried, excitedly.

"Yes, I believe there is something over there in that place," said Sun Bird.

"I believe scouts are hiding there," declared White Otter. "Hu-ya has told us about them. It is good."

They watched the grove with new interest. They knew that Hu-ya, the great war bird, was not likely to be frightened by Ma-ya-sh, the prairie

wolf, nor Ta-to-ka-dan, the antelope, nor even by great Ma-to-ho-ta, the bear. They felt quite certain, therefore, that Hu-ya had discovered other enemies in the grove.

"Perhaps a war party is hiding over there," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps they found out about the ponies. Perhaps they sent those scouts to fool us."

"I do not believe a war party is hiding in that place, White Otter told him. "A war party would go away while it was dark."

"Yes, I believe that is true," agreed Sun Bird.

The Sioux were perplexed. Although the actions of Hu-ya, the war bird, led them to believe that the grove concealed some of their foes, they were unable to guess why the latter had loitered in the timber. While they were trying to solve the mystery they saw another smoke signal rising behind the ridge. It appeared in the place where they had discovered the other signal. The smoke column was light and indistinct, and soon broke into intermittent puffs. In a few moments it ceased.

"Now I know that some one is hiding over there where the trees grow," declared White Otter. "I believe they are scouts. I believe they found

out about the ponies. It made them cautious. I believe those riders went to bring the war party. I believe they will come to that place when it gets dark. We must watch out."

"I believe they are Pawnees," said Sun Bird.

"I do not know who they are, but I am going to find out about it," White Otter told him.

CHAPTER III

OLD ENEMIES

THEY watched until the grove finally faded out in the twilight. Then they listened for sounds which might warn them of the arrival of a war party. It was barely dark when they heard signals passing across the plain. The cry of Ma-ya-sh sounded faintly from the west. It scarcely died away before an answer rose from the vicinity of the grove.

"The war party is coming," said Sun Bird.

"Listen!" cautioned White Otter.

They listened closely. Many moments passed. The stillness was unbroken.

"What was it?" inquired Sun Bird.

"I heard something, far away," White Otter told him. "It sounded like a pony. I believe some one stopped the noise."

As time passed and they heard nothing further, they felt sure that a company of foes had arrived at the grove. The thought made them uneasy. They feared that the two scouts would be sure to tell their companions about the pony tracks

which crossed the ravine and led away toward the east. The Sioux recalled that the mysterious riders had spent some time looking toward the ridge.

"Perhaps they know we are here," said Sun Bird.

"Yes, I believe that is why they went away," replied White Otter. "I believe they went to tell their people about it. Their friends waited behind those trees to see if any one came over to this place."

"Well, they did not see us," said Sun Bird.

"No, they could not see us, but perhaps they know some one is watching them," White Otter told him. "Perhaps scouts will ride over here to find out about it. I believe scouts were close by when we were hiding over there in that gully. Now they will come to this hill. It would be foolish to stay here."

"Well, my brother, what do you propose to do?" inquired Sun Bird.

"I propose to find out about those people," replied White Otter.

"How can you do that?"

"Come, we will go to Little Raven," said White Otter. "Then I will tell you about it."

They crossed back over the ridge, and found Little Raven waiting with the ponies. He said he had seen nothing but a stray antelope on that side of the ridge.

"My brothers, you must listen sharp to what I am about to tell you," said White Otter. "I believe a war party is hiding over there where those trees grow. I do not know who it is. That is bad. Perhaps it is the Pawnees. The Pawnees are our enemies. Once they came to our village and did much harm. Perhaps they are going again to make war on my people. It is true that we came here to look for buffaloes. Well, we found something different. We are Dacotahs. We must find out who is over there. We must try to find out where they are going. Then we will know what to do. Perhaps we will do a big thing for my people."

White Otter paused and waited for his companions to speak. Many moments passed before Sun Bird finally replied.

"My brother, your words are good," he said. "You are a great war chief. You are the leader. Come, tell us what you propose to do."

"My brothers, I am going over there where the trees grow to find out who is there," declared

White Otter. "Now listen sharp. There is only one way to do this thing. I believe scouts will come to this place. If we cross over this hill and go straight ahead we will meet them. We must not do that. I will tell you what to do. That gully where we hid ourselves goes a long ways toward the lodges of my people. It is good. We will follow this ridge that way. When we get past those trees, we will cross this ridge and ride over to that gully. Those people will go the other way to look for us. They will follow the tracks of our ponies. When we get to that gully we will listen. If we do not hear anything, I will go ahead and creep up to those trees. Perhaps I will find out who is there."

"You are very brave, but you must not go there alone," said Sun Bird. "You will be in great danger. I will go with you."

"No, you must not do that," White Otter told him. "You must stay behind and help Little Raven with the ponies. Then if anything bad happens to me, perhaps you can help me. It is the best way to do. Come, my brothers, we will go away before those scouts come over here and find us."

They rode northward along the base of the

ridge. They went a long distance before White Otter finally turned toward the west. Then they rode to the top of the ridge, and stopped to listen. All was still. Darkness hid the grove. They knew that the ravine was directly ahead of them, and they advanced cautiously toward the west.

"Perhaps the ponies will call," Little Raven suggested, uneasily.

"We must be ready," White Otter cautioned him.

They rode across the plain in silence, alert for the first warning of danger. They realized that at any moment they might encounter scouts moving cautiously through the night along the flank of an advancing war party. When they finally reached the ravine, the night was far gone. White Otter and Sun Bird immediately dismounted, and climbed to the top of the ravine. They looked anxiously in the direction of the grove. It was hidden far away in the darkness. They watched for the tell-tale glow of a fire, but had little hope of seeing it.

"No, those people are not so foolish," declared White Otter.

"Well, my brother, if there is no fire it will be hard to see who they are," Sun Bird told him.

"Perhaps my ears will tell me that," replied White Otter. "I know the words of the Pawnees. I know the words of the Crows. I know the words of the Kiowas. I will get close to that place and listen sharp."

White Otter, I believe it would be foolish to go over there," said Sun Bird. "If you will listen to my words, I will tell you something better."

"You are my brother, and you are a chief of the brave Minneconjoux—I will listen to your words," agreed White Otter.

"It is good," declared Sun Bird. "Now I will tell you how I feel about this thing. We are in a good place. Those people cannot see us when it gets light. You say perhaps those people are Pawnees. It may be true. You say perhaps they are going to fight your people. It may be true. You say it makes you feel bad. You say we must find out about it. It is true. I will tell you the best thing to do. We will stay here until the light comes. Then we will watch close. If any one comes away from that place we will see them. If they travel toward the lodges of your people they will go by this place. Then we will follow them. We will get close and find out who they are. If they go the other way, we will let them

ride away. My brother, I believe it is the best thing to do."

White Otter kept silent. He was studying the plan of Sun Bird. The latter waited patiently for him to reply. It was some time before White Otter spoke.

"Sun Bird, I have listened to your words, but I will not do as you propose," he said, finally. "You say if those people are going to the lodges of my people they will pass this place. Perhaps they have passed by here in the darkness. If we wait here until the light comes perhaps it will be too late to help my people. My brother, I must find out about it. I am going to do what I told you about."

"Well, you are the leader," Sun Bird told him. "I will not talk any more against it."

"It is good," replied White Otter.

A few moments afterward he disappeared into the night. Choosing a star to guide him in the proper direction, he loped across the plain as easily and as silently as Ma-ya-sh, the wolf. Aware that there was a possibility of blundering into his foes, he stopped many times to listen. The great plain was steeped in silence. He believed that the strangers had remained in the

grove. The thought somewhat relieved his anxiety for his people. He had little fear for himself. Having passed through many thrilling adventures, he had learned to look upon danger and death with the stolid indifference of the seasoned warrior.

White Otter had gone a long distance from the ravine when he suddenly heard the long, dismal wail of a prairie wolf rising through the night. The cry had sounded somewhere near the ridge upon which the Sioux had passed the day. White Otter smiled as he realized that his prophecy about the scouts had been verified.

"They did not find us," he murmured.

As the call was not repeated, he continued toward the grove. He believed that the scouts were notifying their comrades that the country was free of foes. White Otter found keen satisfaction in the thought of outwitting them. He had little doubt that they were his hated foes, the Pawnees, and he felt certain that they were on a war expedition.

As he approached the grove, White Otter slackened his pace and became as alert and cautious as To-ka-la, the little gray fox. He knew that if a war party had taken possession of the grove,

sentinels had been stationed on the plain to watch for foes.

"Now I must be cautious," he told himself.

Soon afterward he saw the grim, black outlines of the grove directly ahead of him. It was a number of arrow flights away, however, and he stopped to listen. He heard nothing. Then he advanced. Slowly, cautiously, he moved through the darkness, listening and watching for the sentinels who he feared were close at hand. Then he heard a pony snort. He stopped and waited in breathless suspense. He decided that the sound had come from the grove. He advanced still more cautiously. When he finally came within bowshot of the trees, he suddenly realized his peril. Alone and on foot, he knew that once discovered there would be little chance of escape. Still he was unafraid. Familiarity with danger had given him confidence.

"I will get away," he kept telling himself.

Then he suddenly heard the murmur of voices. For an instant the sound alarmed him. He had approached nearer the grove than he had supposed. He sank noiselessly to the plain. He lay there some time, endeavoring to identify the speakers. It was hopeless. The voices were low

and indistinct, and he could not distinguish the words. He realized that he must go nearer. He crept slowly forward, a bow length at a time. Then he stopped to listen. The voices had ceased. His heart beat wildly. An alarming possibility flashed through his mind. Had he been discovered? It seemed impossible. He banished the thought. The silence, however, made him suspicious.

"Perhaps they are listening," he whispered.

The silence continued. White Otter was perplexed. He was less than half a bowshot from the cottonwoods. He heard the leaves trembling. He moistened his finger, and found the direction of the breeze. It was stirring toward the grove. He felt relieved. It seemed less likely that he had been discovered. Still he was uneasy. The sudden hush alarmed him.

"Yes, they must be listening," he declared.

A moment afterward a pony whinnied. It seemed to be on the other side of the grove. It was answered by several ponies in the timber. Then some one called. The signal was low and guarded. A reply came from the grove. White Otter heard hoofbeats. Some one was riding toward the cottonwoods. White Otter listened in

trying suspense. He heard many voices. He breathed easier. The mystery was explained. He suddenly realized that the scouts had returned. It was the sound of their approach that had hushed the speakers in the grove.

"It is good," White Otter said, with great relief.

He believed that as the scouts had failed to find evidence of foes, the company in the grove might grow bolder. The next few moments seemed to confirm his hopes. The strangers were talking with far less caution. Still he was unable to catch their words.

"I must go nearer," he said.

He crawled carefully toward the timber, stopping after each bow length to watch and listen. The sounds from the grove reassured him. The warriors were talking and laughing, and apparently had little fear of attack. The ponies, too, were making considerable noise. He heard them stamping, and grunting and shaking themselves. However, he felt quite certain that they were securely picketed.

The sky was sprinkled with stars, and it was possible to see several bow lengths through the night, but White Otter knew that it would be

impossible to penetrate the sinister black shadows which enveloped the grove. His ears alone might tell him what he wished to know. He was quite familiar with the words of the Pawnees, and the Crows, and had heard the dialect of the Kiowas, and he hoped to identify the strangers by their talk. It was a difficult and perilous undertaking, for White Otter knew that to be successful he must approach close up to the edge of the timber.

The night was well advanced and he knew that there was little time to spare. The ravine was far away, and he realized that he would be compelled to exert himself to the utmost to reach it before daylight betrayed him to his foes. Once discovered on the open plain there would be little hope of escape. He determined to make his attempt without further delay. For a moment only he hesitated, while he turned his face toward the sky.

"Wa-kan-tun-ka, make me strong to do this thing," he murmured.

Then he began his perilous, stealthy advance toward the timber.

The sounds convinced him that the strangers were assembled at the pool in the center of the grove. He feared, however, that sharp-eared

sentinels might be lurking at the edge of the plain. Aware that the slightest sound might betray him, he sank close to the earth and crept forward as cautiously as a panther stalking its prey. It took many moments to go a bow length. He had stopped behind a dense cluster of bushes close to the edge of the timber, when he was startled by the sound of voices within several bow lengths of him. He believed he had encountered the sentinels. Scarcely daring to breathe, he pressed his body against the plain and listened. The words of the speakers came distinctly to his ears. He failed to recognize them. They were not the words of the Pawnees. They did not sound like the words of the Crows. The dialect seemed strange and unfamiliar. For some moments White Otter was confused. He wondered if his ears were deceiving him. Then he suddenly identified the peculiar accent. Several years before he had heard it in the Kiowa camp. The mystery was solved. The people in the grove were Kiowas.

Having learned the identity of his foes, White Otter was equally eager to know if it was a war party or only a company of hunters. He saw little chance of gaining the information. Unable

to see the warriors or to understand their words, there seemed no way to guess the intentions of the Kiowas. In the meantime the night was slipping by. Daylight was not far off. White Otter knew that it would be perilous to loiter. Nevertheless he waited, each moment hoping to hear something which might tell him whether the Kiowas were out for peace or war. At last he was rewarded. He heard sounds in the timber which convinced him that the Kiowas were dancing, and singing their war songs. The scouts at the edge of the grove had joined in the chant, and White Otter seized the opportunity to retreat.

Raising himself from the ground, he crawled slowly backward until he had gone a bow length. Then he stopped to listen. The sounds still came from the grove, but he heard nothing from the sentinels. Their silence aroused his fears. Alarming possibilities suggested themselves. Were the Kiowa sentinels listening? Had he betrayed himself? He sank to the plain and waited. The moments seemed endless. The uncertainty tried his courage. He was tempted to spring to his feet, and dash wildly across the plain. He realized that the Kiowas would soon overtake him. Then he heard the sentinels talking and making

their way into the grove. They had abandoned their vigil. His heart filled with joy. He had accomplished his mission. The way was open. He was free to go.

The eastern sky was already turning gray when White Otter finally approached the spot where he had left Sun Bird and Little Raven. He stopped and imitated the bark of the little gray fox. Three times he gave the signal. Then he listened for an answer. A familiar voice sounded softly through the darkness.

"The way is clear," said Sun Bird.

A moment afterward White Otter joined him at the top of the ravine. They descended into the gully to join Little Raven.

"Well, my brothers, I have found out about those people," White Otter told his companions. "They are Kiowas. I believe it is a war party."

"How did you find out about it?" inquired Little Raven.

"I went ahead until I got close to those trees," said White Otter. "Then I crawled up behind some bushes. Then I heard some one talking. I did not know the words. Pretty soon I found out about it. It sounded like the Kiowas. I waited a long time. Then I heard those people dancing

and singing. Then I said: 'It is a war party.' That is all I know about it."

"Well, pretty soon it will be light," Sun Bird told him. "Then we will find out what the Kiowas propose to do."

"Yes, we must watch them until we know where they are going," said White Otter.

CHAPTER IV

TRAILING A WAR PARTY

AT daylight the Sioux peered anxiously toward the grove. It was some time before the little cluster of trees emerged from the shadows. At that moment the Kiowas appeared.

"See, there are our enemies," said Sun Bird.

"Watch sharp," White Otter cautioned him.

Although the Kiowas were too far away to be counted, the Sioux saw at once that it was a large company. They felt sure it was a war party. The Kiowas had turned toward the north. White Otter watched them with considerable uneasiness.

"It is bad," he said. "There are many warriors. They are riding toward the lodges of my people. We must follow them."

"Yes, yes, we will follow them," declared Sun Bird.

They watched closely as the Kiowas rode slowly across the plain. They were a long distance to the westward of the ravine, and were moving directly toward the north. As they drew nearer, the Sioux began to count them. There were sixty

horsemen in the company. They made an imposing spectacle as they rode along in pairs. Even at the distance the Sioux noted that some of the warriors in the lead wore great war bonnets, and they knew that those men were chiefs and war leaders. Then several riders left the column and galloped away in advance of the company.

"The scouts are going ahead to watch for enemies," said Sun Bird.

"Hi, they are coming this way," cried White Otter.

Two riders had turned toward the east, and were riding toward the ravine. They were some distance to the southward of the Sioux, but the latter were greatly alarmed. They felt quite certain that the crafty scouts would follow along the top of the ravine to make sure that it was free of foes. The Sioux were in despair. They feared that they had run into a trap. There seemed to be no way of escape. Discovery seemed certain.

"They will find us!" cried Sun Bird.

White Otter watched the horsemen in thoughtful silence. He was searching his brain for a way out of the predicament. The scouts had covered three-quarters of the distance to the ravine.

Delay was perilous. Roused by the thought, White Otter suddenly determined to race away in full sight of his foes.

"Come," he cried, as he scrambled wildly into the ravine.

"The Kiowas are coming!" Sun Bird told Little Raven.

"Jump on your ponies and follow me," shouted White Otter.

They rode boldly out upon the plain, and turned toward the east. Glancing back they saw that the Kiowas had stopped at sight of them. The scouts made no effort to follow.

"It is good," cried White Otter. "The Kiowas do not know what to do. We will fool them."

Convinced that their foes had no intention of pursuing them, the Sioux slackened the speed of their ponies. Then, when they had gone a safe distance, they turned to watch the perplexed Kiowas. The latter were gathered in a close group, and appeared to be holding a council.

"Well, we are far enough away, now we will wait here and see what those people propose to do," said White Otter.

"Do you believe they know who we are?" Little Raven asked him.

"No," replied White Otter.

A moment afterward the Kiowas resumed their advance toward the north. The scouts had joined their comrades. White Otter was perplexed. He had expected the war party to turn in another direction. If the Kiowas really were bound for the Ogalala camp he believed they would attempt to conceal their intentions. The fact that they continued boldly on their way aroused his suspicions.

"I do not know what to make of it," he told his companions. "If those people are going to my village, I believe they will turn around to fool us."

"I do not believe they know who we are," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps they took us for Pawnees or Cheyennes. Perhaps they do not believe we will follow them."

"Yes, yes, I see that what you say is true," White Otter replied, hopefully. "They do not know who we are. I believe they take us for Cheyenne hunters. It is good. If they keep going ahead, we will circle around and get ahead of them. Then we will go to tell my people. When the Kiowas come to fight us, we will be waiting for them."

The Kiowas had urged their ponies into a

canter. The scouts were riding toward the ravine. The Sioux watched curiously. They wondered if the Kiowas intended to ignore them.

"It is mysterious," White Otter declared, suspiciously. "My brothers, I believe those people are trying to fool us. We must be sharp."

The scouts turned and rode along the top of the ravine, and the war party continued toward the north. Sun Bird and Little Raven waited for White Otter to announce his plans. The latter, however, remained silent. He seemed bewildered by the unusual behavior of the Kiowas. He was watching the two scouts. They glanced back at frequent intervals to make sure that the Sioux were not following them. Otherwise they showed little interest.

"It is mysterious," White Otter said, again. "I do not know what to make of it. Come, Sun Bird, tell me how you feel about it."

"The Kiowas are going toward your village—it looks bad," Sun Bird told him.

"We must follow them," said White Otter. "Come, we will try to fool them."

He rode away toward the east. The two Minneconjoux asked no questions. They looked upon him as the leader, and they were content to rely

upon his judgment. As they cantered across the plain they glanced back at the Kiowas. The two scouts had stopped, and appeared to be looking after them.

"Those scouts are watching us," said Little Raven.

"It is good," laughed White Otter. "We will fool them. Come, ride faster."

They galloped the ponies. Then, as they again looked back, they saw that the war party, too, had stopped, far away to the westward. White Otter laughed gleefully. He turned to the southward, toward the ridge which they had left the day before. His companions believed that he was planning some wily stratagem to deceive his foes.

"Keep watching," cautioned White Otter. "Perhaps those scouts will follow us."

The Kiowas, however, showed no intention of riding after them. One of the scouts was racing toward the war party. The Sioux believed he had gone for instructions. They kept looking back to see what he would do after he had talked with his companions.

"See, see, he is riding back to that gully," cried Little Raven. "Perhaps they are going to follow us."

"No, I do not believe it," said Sun Bird.

The war party was moving on toward the north. A few moments afterward the scout rejoined his companion. Then they, too, rode northward along the top of the ravine. It was apparent that the Kiowas had decided to pay no further attention to the Sioux.

"The Kiowas are sly," declared White Otter. "I cannot tell what they propose to do. Perhaps they are going to the lodges of my people. Perhaps they are trying to fool us. We must follow them and find out about it."

When the Sioux finally reached the ridge, the Kiowas had already disappeared into a dip of the plain. Once over the ridge, White Otter and Sun Bird left their ponies with Little Raven, and climbed the slope to watch. They had little doubt that the crafty Kiowa scouts were similarly employed far away to the northward.

"Now I will tell you why I came here," said White Otter. "I do not believe the Kiowas know who we are. I believe they take us for scouts. Perhaps they take us for Cheyennes. The Cheyenne village is behind us. I came this way to make them believe we were going there. When those scouts do not see us, they will believe we

have gone away. Then they will go ahead. We will follow them."

"It is good," Sun Bird told him.

They had not watched long, however, before White Otter became impatient. He realized that he was wasting valuable time. He wondered if he had blundered. If the Kiowas really intended to go to the Ogalala camp, he feared that he had given them a big advantage. They were a long distance ahead of him, and he knew that it would be necessary to ride hard to beat them to the goal. The thought shook his confidence. He began to doubt the wisdom of his maneuver. Each moment added to his uncertainty. He studied the plain for a way to follow the war party without being seen. The ridge offered the only opportunity. It extended a considerable distance toward the north, and by riding along the east side of it he believed he might again come in sight of his foes.

"Come, Sun Bird, we will ride along behind this hill, and try to follow the Kiowas," he said.

Then Little Raven called, and when they turned they saw him pointing excitedly toward the north. Looking across the plain, they discovered a riderless pony running toward the west.

"Bring up the ponies! Bring up the ponies!" White Otter called, in alarm.

They hurried down the ridge and met Little Raven. Then they sprang upon the ponies, and galloped over the ridge. Once over the top, they ran back to watch, while Little Raven took charge of the ponies. Two horsemen had already appeared in pursuit of the runaway pony. The Sioux realized that they had barely escaped discovery.

"They did not see us," declared Sun Bird.

"It is good," said White Otter.

They watched the race with great interest. The riders soon overtook the pony. Then they turned about and cantered away toward the east. The Sioux looked inquiringly at one another. Who were the strange riders? Where had they come from? Was another war party in the vicinity? The alarming questions flashed through their minds. They were puzzled.

"I believe it is the Kiowas," White Otter declared, finally. "I believe they have turned toward The-place-where-the-day-begins."

"Then they must be trying to fool us," said Sun Bird.

"I do not know what they are trying to do," White Otter replied, suspiciously.

In the meantime the distant horsemen had disappeared, and the plain seemed free of foes. The Sioux looked toward the east. They examined the tops of the knolls and ridges, and watched closely for dust, but saw nothing to convince them that the war party had gone in that direction.

"This thing is mysterious," said Sun Bird.

They realized that they were in an awkward predicament. They knew that if scouts were loitering in the vicinity of the spot where they had last seen the Kiowa war party it would be perilous to remain on the western side of the ridge. Still, if they crossed the ridge and attempted to advance along the other side they feared they would be discovered by scouts watching somewhere on that side of the plain. For some moments they were undecided as to just what to do.

"My brothers, I will tell you how I feel about this thing," Sun Bird said, suddenly. "If the Kiowas have turned toward The-place-where-the-day-begins, I do not believe they are going to the lodges of our people. If that is true, it would be foolish to follow them. I believe there are

many enemies in this country. We must not stay here. Come, we will ride around and find out if the buffaloes have come into this place. Then we will go back to our people."

"Sun Bird, before we go away we must find out about this thing," White Otter told him. "Perhaps it is true that the Kiowas are not going to the lodges of my people. We are not sure about it. Perhaps they know who we are. Perhaps they turned around to fool us. Perhaps if we do not follow them they will circle around and come to the lodges of my people. My brothers, we must find out where those Kiowas are going."

"How can we do that?" inquired Little Raven. "A war party leaves scouts behind. If we try to follow the Kiowas before it gets dark those scouts will see us. If we wait until it gets dark the Kiowas will be too far away."

"Listen sharp, my brothers, and I will tell you how I propose to do this thing," said White Otter. "It would be foolish to follow along this hill. If we do that the Kiowas will see us. We will do something different. We will cross over this hill, and ride away toward The-place-where-the-day-begins. If the Kiowas are watching they will say, 'Hi, those scouts were hiding behind that hill.

Now they believe we have gone away. See, they are going to tell their people about it. They are riding toward the Cheyenne camp. They must be Cheyennes.' We will keep going toward the Cheyenne lodges. Then we will circle around, and try to find the Kiowas. If we do not find them over there, we will know that they have gone to fight my people.''

''It is good,'' agreed Sun Bird.

''We will go,'' said White Otter.

They crossed the ridge, and rode boldly away toward the southeast, in the direction of the Cheyenne camp. They had little doubt that sharp-eyed Kiowa scouts were watching them. They glanced back many times, but saw nothing to confirm their suspicions.

Toward the end of the day they came in sight of another little grove of cottonwoods. They circled about it many times before they finally ventured within arrow-range. The grove was unoccupied, and contained a tiny pool. They killed several sage grouse in the timber.

''It is good,'' said White Otter. ''We will stay here until the sun goes away. Then we will circle around and try to find the Kiowas.''

At the end of the day they left the grove and

rode off toward the north, hoping to cross the trail of the war party. Twilight had already fallen upon the plain when they finally found the fresh tracks of many ponies. The trail led toward the east. The Sioux felt sure that it had been made by the Kiowas.

"Now we know that your people are safe," declared Sun Bird.

"Yes, I believe it is true," replied White Otter.

He was gazing thoughtfully across the plain. A new possibility had suddenly suggested itself. He felt certain that he had guessed the destination of his foes. He turned eagerly to his companions.

"Now I know about this thing," he told them, excitedly. "I believe those Kiowas are going to fight the Cheyennes. Yes, now I see how it is. They took us for Cheyennes. They tried to fool us. When we went away they circled around and came over here. Yes, yes, those Kiowas are going to fight the Cheyennes."

"I believe it is true," said Sun Bird. "Now we know about it. Well, we will not follow them. We will go back and look for buffaloes."

White Otter was silent. His friends saw that he was thinking about something. They waited for him to speak.

"The Cheyennes are our friends," he said at last. "Once we went with them to fight the Pawnees. Once we went with them to fight the Kiowas. We took away some good ponies in that fight. The Cheyennes are very brave. Red Dog, their chief, is our friend. My brothers, I am thinking about these things."

"How do you feel about it?" inquired Sun Bird.

"I will tell you," said White Otter. "We are Dacotahs. The brave Cheyennes are our friends. The boastful Kiowas are our enemies. A Dacotah helps his friends and fights his enemies. I am going to tell the Cheyennes about the Kiowas."

"It is good," declared Sun Bird.

"Hi, we will go to the village of our brothers the Cheyennes, and help them fight the Kiowas," Little Raven cried, enthusiastically.

CHAPTER V

OFF TO WARN THE CHEYENNES

HAVING resolved to carry a warning to their friends, the Cheyennes, the Sioux abandoned their peaceful hunting expedition, and prepared for war. The idea filled them with enthusiasm. The Kiowas were old foes who stole Sioux ponies and killed Sioux hunters at every opportunity, and the three young scouts were ready and eager to make war upon them. It was not the first time they had maneuvered against the Kiowas, and they had learned from experience that the latter were brave and crafty foes.

"White Otter, you are a great war chief, you must be the leader," declared Sun Bird.

"Yes, White Otter, you are the leader," agreed Little Raven. "Tell us what you propose to do."

"We must get to the Cheyenne village ahead of the Kiowas," White Otter told them. "We will not follow them. We will circle back toward the Cheyenne lodges. Come, we must go."

They turned about and rode in the direction of the Cheyenne camp. It was a day's journey dis-

tant, and they realized that to beat the Kiowas they must reach the village before the next sunrise. The day was almost gone, and the light was fading from the plain. Aware that it would be necessary to ride continuously through the night, they held the ponies to an easy canter. As they rode they kept a sharp watch to the eastward where the heavy night shadows were already forming. They were fearful that the Kiowas might have discovered them. In that event they felt sure that those crafty foes would endeavor to intercept them before they reached the Cheyennes.

"There is a hill over there," White Otter said, suspiciously. "It is bad. Perhaps the Kiowas are riding along behind it."

They looked anxiously into the east, but the ridge had vanished into the dusk. They wondered if grim Kiowa warriors were racing along behind the barrier. The idea troubled them. They rode faster. The approach of darkness, however, gave them confidence. They believed it would be possible to elude their foes under cover of the night.

When they finally turned toward the east the plain was dark. They rode more cautiously. It

was not long before they heard sounds which made them suspicious. A wolf howled somewhere ahead of them. They immediately stopped to listen. They heard it a second time, but it seemed perfectly natural.

"It sounds like Ma-ya-sh," said Little Raven.

"I believe it is a Kiowa," White Otter told him. "We must watch out."

They turned from their course, and rode on at a walk. Before they had gone an arrow flight, they heard the cry of the wolf a short distance north of them. They wondered if the scout who had called before had circled to search for them.

"No, I believe it is some one different," whispered White Otter. "It did not sound the same."

"Your ears are sharp," said Sun Bird.

A moment afterward a pony whinnied shrilly. Little Raven's pony replied. They stopped in alarm. It was apparent that the Kiowas were on all sides of them. They feared that the pony had betrayed them. They were at a loss to know just what to do.

"Listen," cautioned White Otter.

They waited anxiously to hear the hoofbeats of advancing ponies. The plain was still. They wondered if the Kiowas, too, had stopped to listen.

The possibility made them cautious. They feared to ride away before they located their foes. They believed that if the Kiowas heard them they might close in and make it impossible to escape. Their only chance seemed to be to withdraw quietly, and slip away in the darkness.

"It is bad," White Otter whispered. "Perhaps some of the Kiowas will try to keep us here until their friends ride to the Cheyenne camp."

"Yes, yes, I believe it is what they are trying to do," declared Sun Bird.

The thought aroused them. They realized that each moment of delay lessened the chance of arriving at the Cheyenne village in time to warn their friends. They feared that the war party was racing wildly through the night in an effort to beat them to the goal.

"We must go ahead," said White Otter.

They rode cautiously toward the east. When they had gone several arrow flights without encountering their foes they became bolder. They urged the ponies to a canter. A moment later a piercing yell rose behind them. It was answered on both sides of them. They heard the hoofbeats of galloping ponies.

"Keep going! Keep going!" cried White Otter.

Aware that further caution would be useless, they lashed the ponies to top speed, and began a wild race across the plain. They heard the Kiowas thundering after them. They were whooping savagely, and the Sioux learned that they were on three sides of them. The front appeared to be open. Then White Otter suddenly suspected a trap.

"Watch out for the hill!" he cried, warningly.

They feared that other Kiowas were waiting for them on top of the ridge. There seemed to be no way to avoid them. With foes on both sides of them, they were forced to ride ahead. Ready to fight those who might attempt to bar the way, they stared anxiously into the night for a sight of the low, black barrier that threatened them with disaster. It soon loomed up through the darkness. They drew their bows and prepared to fight. Then, when they had almost reached the base of the ridge, White Otter attempted a bold bit of stratagem to outwit his foes.

"Stop! Stop!" he cried.

They threw the ponies upon their haunches. Then they listened. The Kiowas rushed past them. White Otter saw his opportunity. There was not a moment to spare.

"Come!" he shouted, as he rode wildly toward the south.

The trick had been successful. The Kiowas rode part way up the ridge before they discovered that they had passed their foes. Then they dashed recklessly down the slope, and stopped for an instant to learn which way the Sioux had gone.

"Follow me," cried White Otter.

When they had gone a bowshot, the Sioux turned up the ridge and swept over the summit before the Kiowas who were waiting to intercept them learned what had happened. They reached the level plain and were a full bowshot away when they heard the Kiowas riding furiously down the ridge in pursuit of them.

"Ride faster!" shouted White Otter.

They forced the ponies to the utmost in an effort to get beyond hearing of their foes. The Kiowas had become quiet. Even the sounds from their ponies had died away. The Sioux felt encouraged. They believed they had ridden beyond ear-shot of their pursuers. Still they kept the ponies to the exhausting pace, for they determined to make the most of their advantage.

"We have fooled them—it is good," laughed

White Otter. "They cannot hear us. They do not know which way to go."

"White Otter, you are as sharp as To-ka-la, the fox," Sun Bird told him.

"Yes, yes, you were too sharp for the Kiowas," declared Little Raven.

"Well, my brothers, we must not feel too big about this thing," White Otter cautioned them. "The war party is ahead of us. We must watch out."

He had barely ceased speaking when they heard the wolf cry rising through the night. It sounded far behind them. Three times it echoed across the plain. They knew at once that it was a signal.

"The scouts are telling their friends about us," said White Otter.

They listened for an answer. They hoped it would give them a clew to the whereabouts of the war party. There was no reply. It was evident that the main company of Kiowas were either beyond hearing or too cautious to betray themselves. The first possibility gave the Sioux considerable concern. If the war party was beyond hearing, they realized that it was far in advance of them. They wondered if their ponies were equal to the task of overtaking their foes.

"We must go faster," White Otter said, impatiently.

The ponies were running at speed which few ponies in the Dacotah nation could equal, and the Sioux believed that if they could maintain the pace they would eventually overtake and pass the Kiowas. The gallant little beasts showed no signs of weakening, and the riders made no effort to spare them. White Otter rode a fiery little piebald which had been presented to him by Curly Horse, the war chief of the Minneconjoux Sioux. It had proved its powers on an expedition against the Blackfeet the year previous, when it outran the famous black war pony of the Blackfeet chief, Many Buffaloes. White Otter had little fear that it would fail him in the present emergency. Sun Bird rode a wiry little roan, that had proved a worthy competitor of the piebald. Little Raven was mounted upon a wild-eyed pinto, which White Otter had presented to him several years before. It, too, was famous for speed and endurance.

Convinced that there was slight danger of being overtaken by the scouts, the Sioux fixed their thoughts upon the war party. The wolf calls still came from the west, but there was no response from the east. White Otter wondered if the main

force of Kiowas really were as far away as they appeared to be.

"Perhaps they are watching for us," suggested Sun Bird. "Perhaps they are keeping quiet so that we will not know where they are."

"It may be true," said White Otter.

They had little doubt that the Kiowas would make every effort to prevent them from carrying a warning to the Cheyenne camp. White Otter believed that the war party planned to approach the village under cover of the night, and make a sudden attack at daylight.

"We will tell the Cheyennes about it," he said. "They will be ready when the Kiowas come to fight them."

The Sioux were still a long distance from their goal, however, and they feared to become too confident. Two disturbing possibilities confronted them. One was that they might eventually encounter the war party. The other was that the courageous little ponies might suddenly collapse with exhaustion. The latter thought caused them the most anxiety. They decided to ride at an easier pace. Then White Otter resolved to turn more to the southward in the hope of passing the Kiowas. He also believed that it would offer

a shorter and more direct route to the Cheyenne camp.

The signals from the west had ceased, and the Sioux wondered if the scouts had abandoned hope of getting into communication with the war party. Then the hateful call suddenly sounded across the plain. It seemed considerably nearer. They were perplexed. Had the Kiowas actually gained upon them? It seemed unlikely.

"Perhaps we have passed the war party," said Sun Bird.

"It is mysterious," declared White Otter. "I believe we are running into danger."

They stopped for a moment to listen. The ponies had barely come to a standstill when they heard another signal directly ahead of them. It was so distinct and close at hand that it startled them. The one who had made it seemed to be within arrow range. The Sioux believed that they had overtaken the war party. The thought roused them. They wondered if the Kiowas had discovered them. They heard a horse cantering across the plain. It was somewhere on their right. It passed, and they felt relieved. Then they heard voices. The speakers were within bow range. The rider was moving toward them. The voices

ceased as the pony drew near. Then the Sioux heard a low, cautious challenge pass between the scouts. A moment afterward they resumed their talk. The rider had joined his friends.

"The Kiowas have left scouts behind to watch," White Otter whispered. "Pretty soon those other scouts will come. We must get away."

Then several of the Kiowa ponies called, and the Sioux rode away at a furious pace. The Kiowas instantly raised the alarm, and raced after them. White Otter heard an arrow pass over his head.

"Keep low on your ponies!" he cried. "The Kiowas are shooting their arrows."

The Sioux ponies soon carried their riders beyond danger, and then White Otter veered sharply in his course and threw the Kiowas from the trail. Although there seemed to have been a number of riders, the Sioux believed that they were scouts, and that the war party was still riding toward the Cheyenne camp.

"They will not catch us again," laughed White Otter, as he turned still farther to the southward.

CHAPTER VI

A PERILOUS MISSION

DAYLIGHT was close at hand when the Sioux suddenly heard the dogs barking furiously in the Cheyenne village. The sounds filled them with alarm. Had they arrived too late to warn the Cheyennes? Had the Kiowas beaten them to the goal? Had the fight begun? The possibilities tried their courage. Lashing their exhausted ponies into a final, heart-breaking sprint they raced recklessly toward the camp.

As they came within bowshot of the village they heard a company of horsemen riding to meet them. They drew in the ponies, and listened in trying suspense. Had they encountered friends or foes? They determined to take no chances. Drawing their bows, they waited for the riders to approach. They had stopped. They, too, were suspicious and cautious.

"Ho, Cheyennes, we are Dacotahs," cried White Otter. "We have come to help you."

They heard the murmur of voices. A pony called. Then all was still. The Sioux waited

impatiently. Many moments passed. They became suspicious.

"I believe it is the Kiowas," said Sun Bird.

As he spoke a voice sounded from the darkness. It addressed them in the Sioux dialect.

"Ho, Dacotahs, tell us who you are," it said.

"Watch out, perhaps the Kiowas are trying to catch us," said Sun Bird.

"I am White Otter; ask your chief Red Dog about me," White Otter called out.

"Ho, my brother, we will come to meet you," said the stranger.

"Wait," cried White Otter. "First tell me who you are."

"I am Painted Weasel—do you know me?"

"Yes, I know you," said White Otter.

The Sioux advanced and found a small company of Cheyennes waiting a short distance from the village. Painted Weasel was an old friend whom the Sioux greeted warmly. They found a number of other acquaintances in the company that had ridden out to intercept them. Painted Weasel, however, was the only one who spoke their words.

"Your ponies have run fast," said Painted Weasel. "Has anything bad happened to you?"

"My brother, the Kiowas are coming to fight

you," White Otter told him. "We found out about it, and came here to tell you. They are close by. There is little time. Ride to the camp and call your warriors."

Painted Weasel addressed his companions. When he finished speaking, three Cheyennes rode silently into the night. The Sioux knew that they had gone to watch for the Kiowas.

"Come," said Painted Weasel.

When they arrived at the camp they were met by Red Dog, the Cheyenne war chief, an old friend and ally whom White Otter and Sun Bird had saved from death at the hands of the Pawnees.

"Ho, my brothers, you have come to our lodges —it is good," cried Red Dog.

"No, Red Dog, it is bad," White Otter told him. "We came here to tell you that the Kiowas are coming to fight you. They are close by. You must get ready."

When Red Dog repeated the warning to his tribesmen, they were thrown into a frenzy of excitement. In a few few moments the camp was in an uproar. All was confusion, as the alarmed Cheyennes ran through the village calling the people from the lodges. Then Red Dog took command, and restored order.

"Light the fires!" he cried. "Drive in the ponies."

The women and boys brought fuel for the fires. A company of young men rode out on the plain to drive in the ponies. The warriors gathered eagerly about their chief. The Sioux noted that the Cheyennes were few in numbers.

"It is bad," Red Dog told White Otter. "Many of our warriors have gone to hunt buffaloes. There are few of us here. It will be hard to hold off the Kiowas."

"We will help you," said White Otter.

"It is good," replied Red Dog. "I have seen you do big things. My people will feel strong because you are here."

Fires had been lighted to prevent the Kiowas from entering the camp under cover of the darkness. Soon afterward the young men drove in the ponies. They were driven into a stout corral. Then the warriors stationed themselves along the edge of the village to watch for the Kiowas. The Sioux joined Red Dog. The latter was a cripple, having had both legs broken at the time the Sioux saved him from the Pawnees.

"See, it is getting light," White Otter said, hopefully. "I believe the Kiowas will hold back.

Perhaps they know that we have told you about them."

"Do they know who you are?" inquired Red Dog.

"No," replied White Otter. "I believe they took us for your people."

"It is good," declared Red Dog.

As darkness finally passed, and dawn lighted the plain, the little company of Cheyennes looked anxiously toward the west. The Kiowas, however, failed to appear. The Cheyennes felt more hopeful. They believed there was less chance of the Kiowas attacking the camp in daylight.

"If they do not know that our people are away, they will be cautious," said Red Dog. "Perhaps they were coming here to run off ponies."

"Yes, I believe that is what they proposed to do," White Otter told him.

Soon afterward they saw three of the Cheyenne scouts riding toward the camp. When they arrived, the warriors crowded about them to learn what they had discovered. They said that they had heard nothing of the Kiowas during the night, but at daylight they had discovered what appeared to be a wolf, at the top of a ravine some distance to the westward. The actions of the wolf had

convinced them that it was a disguised scout, and they believed the war party was hiding in the ravine. Two of the Cheyenne scouts had remained out on the plain to watch.

"Yes, I believe that wolf was a Kiowa," White Otter told Red Dog. "That is how they tried to fool us, but we were too sharp."

"I do not believe they will come here while it is light," said Red Dog. "Thunder Hawk and Running Buffalo are watching. They are sharp. The Kiowas will not get past them."

Convinced that there was no immediate danger of an attack, the Cheyennes relaxed their vigilance. Red Dog appointed some of the older boys to watch along the edge of the camp, while the warriors assembled in council to discuss plans for defending the village.

"My brothers, the Kiowas are close by," said Red Dog. "Our brothers, the Sioux, have told us about them. It was a big thing to do. If these brave Sioux had not come here, perhaps the Kiowas would have run off many ponies. Now we know about it. The Kiowas are strong. There are few of us. It will be hard to keep them out of the camp. We must send scouts to bring back

the hunters. Then we must make a big fight until our people come."

"Red Dog, give us fresh ponies, and we will go to find your brothers," White Otter told him.

"It is good," said Red Dog. "Cheyennes, the Sioux are our friends. They are going to bring back the hunters. They are great scouts. The Kiowas cannot fool them. Come, my brothers, lead out three of my best war ponies for these brave Sioux."

Three of the best ponies in the Cheyenne tribe were brought for White Otter and his companions. When they mounted them and prepared to ride away, an old man came forward and signaled that he wished to speak to them.

"It is Ghost Bear, he is a great Medicine Person," Red Dog told them.

"Young men, I have some words for you," he said in the Sioux tongue. "You came here to help us. You are our friends. I know about you. You are brave. You are going into great danger. You are going into the country of our enemies, the Pawnees. I do not wish anything bad to happen to you. That is why I am going to help you. But first tell me who is the leader."

"My brother, White Otter, is the leader," Sun

Bird told him. "He is a great war chief of the Ogalalas. He has done many big things."

"Yes, yes, I know that White Otter is a great chief," said Ghost Bear. "I know that he saved the life of Red Dog. I know that he went with our people to fight the Kiowas. Now, White Otter, I am going to give you something to keep you safe. You must wear this mysterious Medicine Bag about your neck. It will make you strong and keep you from harm. It will give you power to overcome your enemies."

He advanced to White Otter and gave him a small buckskin bag. White Otter fastened it about his neck. The superstitious young Ogalala felt certain that it contained some mysterious Medicine Token which would guard him against misfortune.

"Ghost Bear, I see that you are a great Medicine Person," he said. "You have given me this mysterious Medicine Thing. I will keep it. I believe it will make me strong."

"My brothers, you are about to ride away, perhaps the Kiowas will try to catch you," said Red Dog. "I do not believe they will be able to come up with those ponies. We will keep

watching. If the Kiowas go after you, we will ride out and drive them back."

"No, my brother, that would be foolish," White Otter told him. "Ghost Bear has given me this great Medicine Thing. I see that these ponies are fast. The Kiowas cannot harm us. You must keep watching. The Kiowas are sharp. Pretty soon we will bring back your brothers. Then we will ride out and chase away the Kiowas. We will take many ponies. Now we are going away. Be brave, my friends."

Then the three Sioux scouts rode away toward the south. The Cheyennes stood at the edge of the camp and looked after them. They kept a sharp watch to the westward. There was no sign of their foes. They wondered if the Kiowas had discovered the three horsemen.

"I do not believe the Kiowas will follow them," Red Dog said, hopefully.

They continued to watch until the Sioux were far away. Then they felt less anxious. Having gained a big lead, they believed the Sioux would have little difficulty in keeping ahead of their foes. Then they suddenly discovered something which filled them with gloomy forebodings of evil. A golden eagle, the war bird, had appeared in the

sky. It was circling directly over the camp. The Cheyennes watched it with superstitious fear.

"It is bad," cried old Ghost Bear, the Medicine Man. "It means war."

"Look, look, the great war bird is flying toward the place where the Kiowas are hiding," cried the Cheyennes.

"It is a bad sign," the old men declared, solemnly.

"My brothers, we must get ready to fight," said Ghost Bear. "The war bird has warned us. I believe the Kiowas will come to the village."

CHAPTER VII

RED DOG'S STRATAGEM

SHORTLY after the Sioux had disappeared, the Cheyennes discovered what appeared to be smoke, far away to the westward. They watched for some time before they became convinced that it was not a cloud. Then as they finally agreed that it was smoke, they felt sure that it was a signal from the Kiowa war party.

"It is bad," said Red Dog. "I believe the Kiowas are waiting for more warriors. They are sending up that smoke to tell them where they are."

"It must be so," declared Painted Weasel, a famous scout.

The possibility filled the Cheyennes with gloom. Already outnumbered by the war party in the distant ravine, they realized that there was little chance of holding the village against a still stronger force of foes. For a moment they gave way to despair. Some of them proposed to abandon the camp, and seek safety in flight.

"No, no, that would be useless," Red Dog cried

fiercely. "Look about you. Do you see the old people and the women and children? Well, my brothers, think about it. They cannot travel fast. If we try to get away, the Kiowas will soon come up with us. Then most of us will be killed. We must stay here and fight. We are Cheyennes. Does a Cheyenne throw away his women and children to save himself? I am your chief. I will stay here and fight back the Kiowas until our brothers come to help us."

The words of Red Dog roused the fighting blood of his warriors. They replied with a ringing war cry that echoed threateningly across the plain, and carried a bold challenge to their foes. The courage of their chief gave them confidence, and they were eager to meet the Kiowas. Some of the old men ran for the war drums. Then the warriors gathered in the center of the camp, and began to dance and sing their boastful war songs.

"It is good," cried Red Dog. "I see that you are ready to fight. If the Kiowas come to the village we will kill them and take away their ponies."

Once begun, the war ceremonies were continued far into the day. Then they were suddenly brought to an end by the appearance of one of

the scouts who was racing toward the camp. When he came nearer they recognized him as White Horse, a noted warrior. As he rode his sweating pony into the village, the Cheyennes gathered eagerly about him to learn what he had seen.

"It is bad," White Horse told them. "Many more Kiowas have gone into that gully."

"Come, get off your pony and tell us about it," said Red Dog.

"Well, my brothers, I was watching with Running Buffalo and Thunder Hawk," said White Horse. "For a long time we did not see anything. Then we saw some smoke. It was far away. Pretty soon it stopped. Then we saw some smoke coming out of that gully. Then we said, 'Some more Kiowas are coming. They are over there where we saw that first smoke. They are trying to find the war party.' Then we watched close. Pretty soon we saw a scout crawl out of that gully. He looked all around. He could not see us. Then he looked toward that place where the smoke was. He looked a long time. Pretty soon we saw some one on a pony over there. Then the man who came out of the gully began to wave a robe. Then the man on the pony began to ride around.

Running Buffalo said, 'Those Kiowas are talking to one another.' We kept watching. Pretty soon we saw many riders coming out of the place where the smoke was. They were riding toward that gully. Then some more Kiowas came out of the gully to watch. They were waving their arms. The riders came faster. Then they all went into that gully. My brothers, it is a great war party. I believe they will come to the village when it gets dark. Now I have told you about it.''

The Cheyennes remained silent for some moments after White Horse had ceased speaking. His words had confirmed the significance of the distant smoke signal. They believed that the odds against them had doubled. The thought sobered them. They felt little inclination to talk. At last, however, old Ghost Bear rose to address them.

''My friends, White Horse has brought bad words,'' he told them. ''He says that many Kiowas are hiding over there in that gully. What I told you about the great war bird has come true. I believe we will have a big fight. Well, we are Cheyennes. We have fought the boastful Kiowas many times. We have killed many of their warriors. We have run off many of their

ponies. Pretty soon I am going to burn some sweet grass, and sing the Medicine Songs. Then I am going to talk to the Above People. I am going to ask them to help us. They will make us strong. Cheyennes, you must be brave. I believe we will hold off the Kiowas until our brothers come. I have finished."

A few moments later Red Dog spoke. The Cheyennes turned to him with eager attention. He was a great war leader, the son of their beloved chief, War Eagle, who had been killed in a disastrous battle with the Pawnees, and they looked upon him with respect and admiration. They believed that he might find a way to overcome the advantage of the Kiowas, and save the camp.

"My people, Ghost Bear has given you good words," said Red Dog. "I believe what he says is true. I believe the Kiowas propose to fight us. I am not thinking about that. I am thinking about the old people and the women and children. We must try to get them away before the Kiowas come.

"Now, my brothers, listen sharp. I will tell you what I propose to do. We will keep watching until its gets dark. I do not believe the Kiowas

will come while it is light. When it begins to get dark we will send the old people and the women and children away. Some of you must go with them. You must ride far over toward the Place-where-the-day-begins. Then you must circle around and go toward the lodges of our brothers, the Ogalalas. You must send a scout ahead to tell the Ogalalas about it. They will come to help you.

"After the women and children have gone away, the rest of us will get ready to fight the Kiowas. We will try hard to keep them out of the camp. Perhaps we will be wiped away. I cannot tell about that. We are Cheyennes. A Cheyenne is not afraid to die."

The Cheyennes immediately approved the plan of Red Dog. They believed it offered the only chance of saving the women and children. All of the warriors, however, wished to remain at the camp with Red Dog to fight the Kiowas.

In the meantime old Ghost Bear came from the Medicine Lodge with the sacred Medicine Pipe. He called the Cheyennes to assemble in the camp. When they had formed the council circle, Ghost Bear asked a boy to bring some dry willow sticks. Then he asked a warrior to kindle a fire. As the

sticks began to burn, Ghost Bear unwrapped the Medicine Pipe. Then he rose, and tossed a handful of sweet grass upon the fire. As it burned he raised his aged face toward the sky, and chanted a Medicine Song. Then he took some dried bark of the red willow from a small buckskin bag, and filled the bowl of the pipe. Having made these preparations, he turned to the Cheyennes.

"My brothers, I have called you here to take part in the great Medicine Ceremony," he told them. "I have made many smokes to the Above People. It is good. I believe they will help us. Now I am going ahead with the great Medicine Ceremony. You must watch close, and see what I do."

He drew a blazing stick from the fire, and lighted the pipe. For several moments he extended the pipe stem toward the sky, while he invited the mysterious Above People to smoke. Then he drew upon the pipe and puffed the smoke toward the sky, the earth, the east, the south, the west and the north. Having begun the ceremony, he passed the pipe to Red Dog, who puffed the smoke toward the sky. The chief passed the pipe to the warrior at his right, and thus it went round the circle, each warrior puffing smoke toward the

sky and calling upon the Above People to help him.

After all had smoked, the pipe was returned to Ghost Bear, who replaced it in its wrappings. Then he began a weird, melancholy chant, while he moved slowly around the little fire, shaking a medicine rattle. The Cheyennes watched him in superstitious fascination. They believed implicitly in the strange Medicine Beings with whom old Ghost Bear claimed relationship, and they hoped that he might arouse them against the Kiowas.

When Ghost Bear finally ended the mysterious Medicine Ceremony, the Cheyennes again stationed themselves along the edge of the camp to watch the plain. The day was almost finished. The thought of darkness filled them with doubts. They believed that the night threatened them with disaster.

"Pretty soon it will be dark," they told one another, uneasily.

As the sun finally disappeared behind the western rim of the plain, they saw a horseman riding toward the camp. They watched him in great suspense. It seemed a long time before

he came within bow range. Then they recognized him as Running Buffalo, one of the scouts.

"Running Buffalo is coming to tell us something about the Kiowas," they said.

"My brothers, the Kiowas are singing the war songs and making many talks," Running Buffalo told them. "I believe they will set out to fight us as soon as it gets dark. It is bad. There are many Kiowas. Yes, each of us will have to fight three Kiowas. I do not know what will become of the old people, and the women and children. I will not talk about it. My heart is heavy."

"Running Buffalo, we know that many Kiowas are over there in that place, but we are not afraid," Red Dog told him. "We are ready. We will make a big fight, and try to hold them back until our brothers come to help us. Our friends, the Sioux, have gone to bring them.

"Now listen to what I am about to say. I am going to fool the Kiowas, and let the old people and the women and children get away. I am going to send them to our friends, the brave Ogalalas. Now I will tell you what I propose to do. When it gets dark some of us will ride away toward the Place-where-the-warm-wind-blows. We will not go far. Then we will turn around, and ride back

to the camp. We will make a big noise. Our brothers in the camp will make a big noise. When the Kiowas hear it they will say, 'Hi, some people have come to help the Cheyennes.' Then they will stop, and send out scouts. Well, while we are making that noise, the women and children will get away. They will go toward the Place-where-the-day-begins. Then they will circle around and ride fast toward the Ogalala lodges. Some of us will go with them. Some one will ride ahead and ask the Ogalalas to help us. If the Kiowas go that way you must tell us about it. Now you know what I propose to do. See, the light is going. Ride back there and tell your brothers about it."

"It is good," said Running Buffalo. "I will go. When the Kiowas ride toward the village we will keep ahead of them. When you hear the little gray fox barking you will know that the Kiowas are coming."

He mounted his pony and rode away into the west. The Cheyennes watched him in gloomy silence. The light was fading. The day had ended. Night was close at hand.

Then Red Dog began preparations for the defense of the camp. The boys and old men were piling brush and wood along the edge of the

village, to be lighted if the Kiowas attempted to enter. Fires had already been lighted in the center of the camp. The war ponies were brought in, and securely picketed. The frightened women were packing meat for their journey into the north.

Red Dog called the warriors to the fire. It was a pitiably small company. The Cheyenne chief looked upon them with pride. They were great broad-shouldered fellows in the prime of life. Their solemn faces and serious eyes told him that they understood the peril which threatened them. Still there was no trace of fear in their hearts. They waited calmly for the words of their chief.

"My friends, the light has almost gone," Red Dog told them. "We must get ready to send away the women and children, and the old people. I will ask some of you to go out on the plain. Do not go far. Then you must turn around, and ride to the village. Call out, and sing the war songs. Make a big noise.

"Now I will call out the names of some warriors to go with the women and children. Cloud Eagle, and Two Dogs, and Walks Alone, and Hairy Robe, and Lame Bear must take these people to the Ogalalas. I will make Cloud Eagle the leader.

Now you must get ready to go. When we make that big noise you must ride away."

The five warriors who had been selected to guard the women and children on the perilous journey into the north were eager to remain and fight the Kiowas. They concealed their disappointment, however, and began to round up the ponies.

"Listen, Cheyennes," old Ghost Bear cried, excitedly. "I am an old man, but I am not going away. My arms are strong. My eyes are sharp. I will stay here and help you fight the Kiowas."

Encouraged by his example, many other valiant veterans of the war trail offered their services against the Kiowas. Red Dog accepted them. He realized that in the emergency their assistance might be valuable.

"My brothers, you are very brave," he told them. "All of you have fought in many battles. If you feel like staying here to fight, I will tell you to stay. Perhaps you will kill many Kiowas."

Having made preparations for the daring stratagem by which he hoped to save the women and children, Red Dog divided his little force into two companies. He appointed Painted Weasel as leader of the company that was to ride out on

the plain, while Red Dog assumed command of the warriors in the camp. Then the Cheyennes waited for darkness.

When night finally settled upon the plain, Painted Weasel and his companions mounted their ponies and rode away toward the south. At the same time Cloud Eagle assembled the women and children. Then the Cheyennes listened for the signal that would set the camp in a tumult.

"Hi, they are coming!" cried Red Dog.

The hoofbeats of galloping ponies sounded across the plain, and a moment afterward the night rang with the wild shouts of the riders. The warriors in the camp replied with the piercing Cheyenne war cry. Then a perfect bedlam of sounds rose from the village. Men shouted, dogs barked and ponies whinnied.

"Come, come, ride away!" Red Dog told Cloud Eagle.

A moment afterward the little company galloped toward the east. The hoofbeats of the ponies were smothered by the noise from the camp. When the wild tumult finally subsided, the warriors raised their voices in the war songs, and the sounds carried far across the plain. Red Dog

felt certain that the noise had reached the ears of the Kiowas.

"It is good," he cried. "We have frightened the Kiowas. They will be cautious. It will be a long time before they come close. The women and children have got away."

The Cheyennes became quiet. They stood at the edge of the village, listening anxiously. The plain was silent. A great joy filled their hearts. They believed that their women and children had escaped from the Kiowas.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ATTACK ON THE CAMP

ELATED at the successful escape of the women and children, the Cheyennes awaited the Kiowas with less anxiety. They stood at the edge of the village, listening for a warning from the scouts. Some of the older boys had been appointed to stand beside the piles of brush, ready to light them at the command of their chief. A small detail of warriors surrounded the corral to prevent the Kiowas from running off the ponies. The old men kept the fires blazing fiercely in the center of the camp. Everything was ready. The Cheyennes were eager to begin the fight.

"Perhaps the Kiowas are afraid to come," laughed old Ghost Bear.

"Keep watching—they will come," Red Dog warned him.

When half of the night had passed, and they had heard nothing of the war party, some of the younger warriors began to repeat the words of Ghost Bear. The older men cautioned them against becoming too confident. They believed

that the Kiowas were delaying the attack with the hope of catching them off their guard.

"The Kiowas are sharp," said Red Dog. "We must watch out or they will fool us."

Soon afterward the warriors along the southerly side of the camp called out that they had heard a signal. The bark of the little gray fox had sounded far away to the southward. The Cheyennes listened in tense silence. In a few moments the signal was repeated. They knew it had come from one of their scouts. They turned to one another in surprise. Having expected the Kiowas to approach from the west, the call in the south perplexed them.

"It is bad," said Red Dog. "The Kiowas have separated."

"Perhaps scouts went over there to find out who came to the camp," suggested Painted Weasel.

"Yes, that may be true," Red Dog replied, thoughtfully.

Then they heard another signal. It sounded from the west, and was nearer the camp. Red Dog saw his suspicions confirmed. He was confident that the Kiowas had separated into two companies.

"They are coming up on both sides of us," declared Painted Weasel.

A moment later they heard hoofbeats. A pony was racing toward them, from the west. The dogs barked furiously. The Cheyennes believed that one of the scouts was approaching, but they determined to be prepared. They drew their bows, and watched suspiciously. The pony stopped when it came within arrow range. Then they heard the familiar signal.

"Who are you?" inquired Red Dog.

"Thunder Hawk," said a voice from the darkness.

"Ride ahead," Red Dog told him.

In a few moments Thunder Hawk entered the camp. He said that the Kiowas had separated into two companies. One had ridden toward the south. The other was approaching from the west.

"Running Buffalo followed the Kiowas who rode away," said Thunder Hawk. "White Horse is watching the Kiowas who are coming toward the village. He sent me here to tell you about it."

"Did you hear us making that noise?" Red Dog asked him.

"Yes, we heard ponies running, and shouts, and

then we heard the war songs," said Thunder Hawk. "After that the Kiowas rode away."

"They must be scouts," said Red Dog. "Perhaps they are trying to find out who came here."

"No, they are not scouts," declared Thunder Hawk. "There are many ponies. It is a big war party. I believe they are the warriors who came from the Place-where-the-sun-sleeps."

"Then I know about it," said Red Dog. "I believe scouts saw the ponies out there on the plain. Those riders who went away are going to circle around, and try to run off those ponies. Well, we will fool them. The ponies are here."

"Yes, yes, that is what they propose to do," the Cheyennes told one another.

While they were talking, they heard some one approaching from the south. They felt certain it was Running Buffalo. He stopped and imitated the bark of the little gray fox. Then he galloped to the camp.

"Get ready to fight!" cried Running Buffalo. "The Kiowas are coming. They are close behind me. They are trying to find the ponies."

"The ponies are here," Red Dog told him, as he pointed toward the corral.

"It is good," said Running Buffalo. "My

brothers, there are many Kiowas in that war party."

"We are ready," Red Dog said, grimly.

Having learned that the Kiowas were advancing upon the camp, the Cheyennes listened anxiously for the approach of White Horse. As time passed, and he failed to arrive, they became uneasy about him. They wondered what had caused him to loiter. They feared that the Kiowas who were approaching from the south might circle about the village and trap him.

"I will go out there and find him," Thunder Hawk proposed, impulsively.

"Wait," cautioned Red Dog. "White Horse is sharp. The Kiowas will not catch him. He is waiting to find out about something. He will come."

As he finished speaking they heard the signal in the north. It filled them with alarm. Their thoughts turned to Cloud Eagle and the helpless company in his care. Had the crafty Kiowas sent scouts into the north? The Cheyennes weakened at the possibility. They waited in breathless suspense for White Horse to reach the camp.

White Horse soon relieved their fears. He said that the Kiowas who were advancing from the

west had stopped some distance out on the plain. Then he had circled toward the north to make sure that scouts had not gone in that direction. He had heard nothing to arouse his suspicions.

"It is good," declared Red Dog.

"I do not believe the Kiowas know anything about our people who went away," said White Horse. "I believe they came here to run off ponies. When they found out that we knew about it, they sent scouts to bring more warriors. Now they are going to make a big fight. Those people I was watching will wait out there until they hear their friends moving ahead. Then they will all rush in. I believe scouts are creeping toward the camp. We must watch sharp."

"White Horse, your words are good," said Red Dog. "I believe you have found out what the Kiowas propose to do."

Realizing that the Kiowas might begin the attack at any moment, the Cheyennes stood at the edge of the camp, weapons in hand, watching and listening for their foes. They had little doubt that scouts were moving cautiously through the darkness in an effort to reconnoiter the camp. The thought kept them alert. They listened sharply for the sound of stealthy footfalls. For a

long time, however, all was still. Then a pony snorted, in the corral. A dog barked savagely outside the camp.

"Light the fires!" cried Red Dog.

The boys shoved glowing embers into the brush piles. A moment afterward they burst into flames. A wide circle of light spread about the camp. The Cheyennes looked for their foes. They had retreated into the night.

"It was a scout; he was trying to find the ponies," explained a warrior at the corral.

Believing that the Kiowas were close to the camp, Red Dog ordered the boys to keep the fires blazing. The warriors crouched in the shadows from the lodges. They heard nothing further from their foes. They wondered if the scouts had been frightened away.

"The Kiowas are like wolves," laughed Painted Weasel. "They are afraid of the fires."

As if to verify his words, the dismal wail of Ma-ya-sh, the prairie wolf, sounded from the south. The Cheyennes started at the sound. They knew it was a signal from the war party. They believed the Kiowas were ready to advance.

"Watch out!" shouted Red Dog. "The Kiowas are coming."

The wolf call was repeated in the west. It had barely died away before the Kiowa war cry echoed shrilly through the night. The Cheyennes answered the challenge. Then the Kiowas raced toward the camp. They rode close up to the lodges, but the Cheyennes were prepared, and drove them back with a deadly volley of arrows. The Kiowas turned and sought shelter in the darkness.

"We have chased them back," the Cheyennes cried, excitedly.

"Keep watching," Red Dog cautioned them.

The Kiowas were riding around the camp, and yelling fiercely. They appeared to be attempting to stampede the ponies. The latter were plunging and snorting in terror, and those in the corral threatened to break away at any moment. Then the Kiowas suddenly made another attempt to enter the village. They rode recklessly to the edge of the camp, and tried to drive the Cheyennes before them. The latter, however, refused to yield. They realized that to give way meant disaster, and they fought with a stubborn ferocity that bewildered their foes. The old men and the boys fought as fiercely as the warriors. Somewhat sheltered by the lodges, they shot their arrows

with deadly accuracy, and the Kiowas were again compelled to withdraw. This time they went far out on the plain.

The Cheyennes seized the opportunity to turn to their disabled comrades. They had paid a heavy price for victory. A third of the little force had been killed or wounded. There was little time to think about it. The old men barely had time to drag the wounded to a place of safety before they heard the Kiowas again charging upon the village.

The Cheyennes were amazed when their foes passed beyond bow range of the camp, and thundered away toward the south. It was some moments before they recovered from their bewilderment. They were at a loss to understand the strange maneuver. At first they were suspicious, and expected to hear the Kiowas riding toward them from another direction. Then, as time passed and they heard nothing further, they became convinced that the Kiowas had actually gone away. It seemed too good to be true. Despair gave way to joy. The Cheyennes began to laugh, and shout and sing the war songs.

"My brothers, we have done a big thing," Red Dog told them. "We have chased away that great

war party of Kiowas. They are running across the plain. It is something to tell about. I——"

"Listen!" Painted Weasel cried, in alarm.

A moment afterward the startled Cheyennes heard the Kiowa war cry at the edge of the camp. Then, before they realized what had happened, they saw the warriors along the westerly side of the village driven back by a great company of Kiowas who swarmed into the camp on foot. At the same time the horsemen attacked the camp on the south. The wily Kiowas had completely outwitted their foes. The Cheyennes were bewildered and demoralized. They rushed wildly to reinforce their comrades along the threatened side of the village, and the Kiowa horsemen found little opposition. They quickly overcame the feeble guard at the corral, and stampeded the ponies. Then they swept into the camp. The Cheyennes were outnumbered four to one. The village was filled with Kiowas. Resistance meant death.

"Jump on the war ponies and save yourselves!" cried Red Dog.

The Cheyennes rushed toward the terror-stricken ponies in the center of the camp. The Kiowas followed after them. A furious hand-to-hand encounter ensued. Most of the old men

were killed. A few escaped notice in the general confusion, and disappeared into the night. Old Ghost Bear ran far out on the plain, and hid in the sage.

The Cheyennes finally gained possession of the war ponies. They mounted and attempted to ride away. Less than half of the company escaped. Once out of the village, they rode frantically toward the north. The Kiowas made little effort to overtake them. A small company of warriors pursued them a short distance across the plain, but soon turned back to assist in rounding up the ponies, and share in the plunder.

When they found that they were not pursued, the little band of Cheyennes stopped to learn who had escaped. Many famous warriors were missing. Then they suddenly discovered that both Red Dog and Ghost Bear were absent.

"I saw Ghost Bear run out of the camp," declared Running Buffalo. "I believe he got away."

"Where is Red Dog?" Painted Weasel asked, anxiously.

"He was with us when we were fighting to get away," said Running Buffalo. "I saw him kill

two Kiowas. Then the Kiowas rushed at us, and I did not see what became of him."

"Red Dog is dead—the Kiowas have killed him," cried the disheartened Cheyennes.

"Perhaps they have carried him away," said Painted Hawk.

They rallied at the thought. If Red Dog had been captured, they resolved to rescue him. They turned toward the camp. Then they stopped in dismay. The village was ablaze. The Kiowas had set fire to the lodges. The Cheyennes heard them yelling triumphantly, far away to the southward.

"My brothers, there are few of us left," declared Running Buffalo. "It is useless to try to do anything. Come, we will ride after our people, and ask the Ogalalas to help us. Then we will bring a great war party to fight the Kiowas."

They turned toward the north with heavy hearts, and rode silently away into the darkness.

CHAPTER IX

PAWNEES

AS the Sioux scouts rode toward the south to find the Cheyenne hunters, they watched closely to make sure that the Kiowas were not following them. Then, as the day advanced and they saw nothing of their foes, they believed that they had escaped from the Cheyenne camp without attracting the attention of the Kiowa scouts. The thought encouraged them.

"It is good," said Sun Bird. "There is no danger."

"We must not be too sure about it," White Otter cautioned him. "Red Dog told us about the Pawnees. We must watch out."

At first they attempted to follow the trail of the Cheyennes, but as the latter had left the camp some days before the tracks were old and indistinct. The Sioux realized that they would be forced to ride slowly to follow them. Then, too, they feared that the Cheyennes might make many wide and unnecessary detours in their search for buffaloes, and an effort to follow them might

cause much useless riding and a great loss of time. Aware that each moment was precious, White Otter finally determined to leave the trail and ride directly across the plain in the hope of encountering the hunters.

"It is the best thing to do," said White Otter.

"Yes, I believe it will be the quickest way to find the hunters," agreed Sun Bird.

Late in the day they discovered a number of fresh pony tracks leading toward the west. White Otter and Sun Bird dismounted to examine them. They decided that they had been made only a short time before. The trail made them suspicious. They looked anxiously across the plain. There was nothing in sight.

"Perhaps it is the Cheyennes," said Sun Bird.

White Otter remained silent. He was walking slowly along the trail, and examining the tracks with great care. His companions waited for his decision. At last he rose, and shook his head in doubt.

"Do you feel different about it?" Sun Bird inquired, anxiously.

"My brother, I am not sure about it," White Otter told him. "Only a few ponies passed this place—there are many Cheyennes."

"Perhaps they were scouts, going over there to look for buffaloes," suggested Sun Bird.

"Perhaps," said White Otter.

He was looking anxiously toward the west. The plain was level and free of cover, and it was possible to see a long distance ahead. White Otter realized that the riders were farther away than he had supposed.

"Perhaps they are wild ponies," said Little Raven.

"Yes, that may be true," replied White Otter. "Well, we will try to find out about them. Come, we will follow them."

He rode slowly along the trail, and Sun Bird and Little Raven followed him. His doubts had made them suspicious, and they kept a sharp watch for foes. They had gone a considerable distance when White Otter suddenly stopped and dismounted. He stooped and lifted something from the ground. He examined it with great interest. Then he turned to his companions.

"See," he said. "I have found something that tells me what I wish to know."

He passed the object to Sun Bird. It was a small, round, highly polished piece of bone. It had a hole bored through the end of it. Sun

Bird recognized it at once. It had come from a bone breast-plate, worn by warriors to protect them from the arrows of their foes. For some moments he stared at it in silence. Then he gave it to Little Raven.

"Now we know that those ponies carried riders," said White Otter. "They are not our friends, the Cheyennes. They are warriors."

"I believe they are Pawnees," declared Sun Bird.

At that moment White Otter discovered something far away to the northward. A column of smoke was rising against the sky. They watched it until it finally faded from view. They believed it had been a signal from the Kiowa war party. Then White Otter suddenly guessed the truth.

"My brothers, I believe those people are Kiowas," he said. "I believe they are going to help their friends fight the Cheyennes. I believe those Kiowas near the Cheyenne camp sent up that smoke to tell their friends where they are. Come, we will see if it is true."

A short distance farther on the trail turned abruptly toward the north. They felt certain that a company of Kiowas had gone to participate in the attack on the Cheyenne camp. The thought

roused them to action. They realized that the little force of Cheyennes were in a desperate plight.

"My brothers, we must try to find the hunters," cried White Otter. "There is no time to spare."

They left the trail and cantered away toward the south. The day was far gone, and they were eager to find the Cheyennes before darkness fell. They feared that the Kiowas would attack the camp some time during the night. Would the Cheyennes be able to hold them off until their tribesmen came to their aid? The Sioux had grave doubts. They looked anxiously across the plain, hoping each moment to see the hunters come in sight. The day passed, however, and the Cheyennes failed to appear. The Sioux gave way to despair.

"It is bad," White Otter said, soberly, as they abandoned the search at dark.

They found a little spring at the base of a solitary cottonwood tree, and decided to remain there until daylight. After they had picketed the ponies they sat in gloomy silence, staring thoughtfully into the night. The Cheyennes had given them some dried elk meat, but they had no desire

to eat. Their hearts were filled with fears for the people in the Cheyenne camp.

"If the hunters were close by I believe they would come here for water," said Sun Bird. "I believe they are far away."

"It must be so," agreed White Otter. "We looked hard but we could not find them. We did not find their tracks. Perhaps they have followed the buffaloes."

"Perhaps they have gone back to their village," suggested Little Raven.

For a moment the possibility gave them hope. Then they suddenly realized that it would have been difficult for the Cheyennes to have passed them without being seen. They feared that the hunters were still somewhere to the southward, searching for the buffalo herds.

"Well, when it gets light we will ride around until we find their tracks," said Sun Bird. "Then we will soon come up with them. I believe Red Dog and his friends will keep the Kiowas out of the camp until we bring the hunters."

"Red Dog and his friends are very brave, but there are many Kiowas," White Otter told him. "I feel bad about it."

Then their thoughts were diverted by the

strange behavior of the ponies. They had raised their heads, and were looking nervously into the darkness. The Sioux seized their weapons, and sprang to their feet. They untied the ponies and stood beside them, ready to mount and ride away at the first warning of danger.

"Do you hear anything?" Little Raven asked White Otter.

"No," said White Otter.

The ponies still seemed restless and frightened, but they made no attempt to call. The wind was blowing directly toward them. The Sioux believed that if either men or horses were approaching the ponies would have called. Nevertheless, they determined to take every precaution.

"Perhaps something is coming here to drink," said Sun Bird.

"Listen," whispered White Otter.

They heard something moving about in the darkness. One of the ponies snorted and plunged wildly. It tore the lariat from the grasp of Little Raven, and dashed away. White Otter and Sun Bird sprang upon their ponies and raced after it. At that moment Little Raven saw two small awkward creatures galloping toward him. He shot his arrow before he recognized them. One of

them rolled over, bawling lustily. The other ran off. Little Raven suddenly identified them as cubs of the grizzly bear.

"Hi, now I must watch out," he said.

The next moment a savage roar sounded close at hand, and he saw the mother bear running toward the wounded cub. He shot his arrow, and the bear turned to face him. For an instant he saw the threatening glare of her eyes. Then she rushed at him. He shot another arrow. Then he fled toward the cottonwood. He barely had time to draw himself to the lowest limb before the enraged bear was at the tree. She reared unsteadily, and tried to climb. Little Raven attempted to draw an arrow from his bow-case and almost fell from the limb. In the meantime the bear had dropped to the ground, and galloped back to her cubs. At that moment Little Raven heard his friends returning with the ponies.

"Watch out, Ma-to-ho-ta is here!" he cried. "I have killed one of her babies. She is very mad."

"Where are you?" White Otter inquired, anxiously.

"I am up here in this tree," said Little Raven.

"Ma-to-ho-ta has turned our brother into Zi-ca, the squirrel," laughed Sun Bird.

As the Sioux advanced, the bear rushed to meet them. Little Raven heard them shoot their arrows, and gallop away. There was no sound from the bear. He believed they had killed it.

"Ma-to-ho-ta is dead," he shouted.

"Stay where you are," cautioned White Otter. "We will find out about it."

Little Raven heard the ponies snorting nervously, as his friends rode forward to investigate. Then he heard one of the cubs whining. Some one shot an arrow. The cub became quiet. A moment afterward White Otter called him.

"Come down, my brother, Ma-to-ho-ta and her babies are dead," he said.

"I was like a feeble old man," Little Raven cried, angrily, as Sun Bird gave him the lariat of the runaway pony. "That horse fooled me."

"It is bad," said White Otter. "If the Pawnees came here instead of Ma-to-ho-ta they would have run off that pony."

They picketed the ponies, and went to examine the bear. It was unusually large, but thin, and poor in fur, as usual at that season. Little Raven cut off the claws and shared them with his companions. They fastened them to their rawhide belts. Then White Otter cut open the carcass

and drew out the heart. He divided it into three portions, and they ate it. It was an old custom of their people, and they believed that it would give them the strength and courage for which Ma-to-ho-ta was famous.

The night passed without further alarm, and at the first signs of dawn the Sioux rode away to search for the Cheyennes. Red Dog had told them that the hunters proposed to go a day's journey to the southward, and then circle about the plain until they discovered the buffalo herd.

"Well, they must be close by," declared Little Raven.

"We must try hard to find them," White Otter told him.

His mind was filled with distressing possibilities concerning the people in the Cheyenne village. Had the Kiowas made an attack? Had Red Dog and his warriors beaten them off? White Otter feared to hope.

Half of the day had passed before the Sioux saw anything to give them encouragement. Then White Otter discovered a great dust cloud rising behind a long, undulating sweep of the plain, far to the westward. They watched it with breathless interest.

"I believe many buffaloes are running behind that hill," said Sun Bird. "I believe the Cheyenne hunters are chasing them."

"Yes, yes, it is the buffalo herd!" cried Little Raven. "Now we will find the hunters."

"Come, we will ride over there, but we must be cautious," White Otter told them.

They cantered hopefully across the plain. They felt quite certain that they would find the Cheyenne hunters pursuing the buffaloes behind the distant ridge. As they drew near, however, White Otter urged caution. The dust cloud had died away, and he was somewhat suspicious. His companions heeded his warning.

"Yes, we must watch out," agreed Sun Bird.

As they finally came within arrow range, they stopped and examined the top of the ridge with great care. It was exposed, and bare of cover, and offered a poor hiding place. The Sioux saw nothing to arouse suspicion.

"There is no one there," declared Sun Bird.

"I believe it is safe," said White Otter.

Eager to reach the Cheyennes before they got farther away, the Sioux galloped boldly toward the ridge. When they reached it, White Otter and Sun Bird dismounted and scrambled up the

slope to reconnoiter. The plain was dotted with dead buffaloes, and farther to the westward they saw a great company of riders pursuing the herd.

"They are our friends, the Cheyennes," Sun Bird said, excitedly. "Come, we must catch up with them."

"I cannot tell who they are, but I believe they are the Cheyennes," White Otter told him.

They told Little Raven to bring the ponies. Then they rode impulsively across the plain. Their eagerness to overtake the hunters made them reckless. They raced after the distant horsemen at top speed. They passed a cluster of trees but took little notice of them. Convinced that they had found the Cheyennes, their one desire was to overtake them. Buffaloes and hunters had disappeared into a dip of the plain.

"They are riding fast, it will be hard to catch them," declared Sun Bird.

The hunters apparently had failed to notice them. The Sioux were somewhat surprised. They had expected to be discovered when they rode over the ridge. White Otter became suspicious.

"It is mysterious," he said.

They had begun to ascend the hill over which the hunters had disappeared. Great clouds of

dust rose to the westward. It was evident that the chase was still continuing. Then White Otter suddenly glanced back across the plain. He stopped his pony and cried out in alarm.

"Stop!" he shouted.

A small company of horsemen were riding after them. They appeared to have come from the little grove of trees. The Sioux studied them with grave suspicion. At first they took them for Cheyenne scouts. As they came nearer, however, White Otter became doubtful.

"Watch out," he warned. "Perhaps we have run into a trap."

He had barely uttered the warning, when the horsemen whom they had been pursuing swept down upon them from the top of the ridge. For one brief moment the Sioux stared at them in astonishment. They could scarcely believe their eyes. The buffalo hunters were Pawnees. They were already within arrow range.

"Come!" cried White Otter, as he rode madly down the slope.

"Keep low, they are shooting their arrows," warned Sun Bird.

CHAPTER X

A DESPERATE CHASE

THE Sioux turned toward the south with the hope of encountering the Cheyennes somewhere in that direction. The Pawnees were close behind them, and the race was thrilling. The scouts who had followed them from the grove were riding desperately to get in front of them. The buffalo hunters were thundering after them. The Sioux feared that unless they could withdraw beyond bow range it would be only a matter of moments before either they or their ponies were pierced by Pawnee arrows. Having escaped from the first fierce volley, they crouched low and lashed the Cheyenne ponies into a terrific burst of speed to outdistance their foes.

"The Pawnee ponies are tired; they will soon give out," cried Sun Bird.

It was their one hope. They believed that the Pawnees had fatigued their ponies in the long chase after the buffaloes, and they had doubts that they could maintain the pace. The ponies of the scouts from the grove, however, appeared

fresh and speedy, and the Sioux felt less hopeful of eluding them. There were nine riders in the latter company, and they were racing wildly along the flank of the Sioux in an attempt to pass them. They were still beyond range, but were riding at a sharp angle which would soon bring them within bowshot.

"See, the hunters are dropping back!" Little Raven cried, joyfully. "Their arrows are falling behind us."

"We must watch those other riders," White Otter cautioned him. "Their ponies are fresh. They are coming fast. We must keep ahead of them."

It seemed as if the hope of the Sioux was being realized. The main company of Pawnees appeared to be losing ground. They had ceased wasting their arrows. The Sioux glanced back and saw that the distance between them and their pursuers had increased considerably. The riders on their flank, however, were keeping up with them. Little Raven drew his bow.

"Save your arrows," cautioned White Otter.

Aware that the Sioux were distancing them, the Pawnee hunters were shouting encouragement to their tribesmen. The latter, however, were

unable to gain. They were forcing their ponies to the limit, but the Sioux held their advantage. They were riding toward a small stand of timber, some distance ahead of them.

"The Cheyenne ponies are fast, they will carry us away," said Sun Bird.

A moment afterward Little Raven's pony stumbled and plunged to its knees. Little Raven was thrown heavily to the ground. His friends turned in dismay. The Pawnees yelled triumphantly, and lashed their ponies to a fresh burst of speed. Little Raven had kept tight hold of the lariat, however, and as the pony struggled to its feet he sprang upon its back. Then he discovered that the animal had been crippled. It ran with short, faltering strides, and had lost its speed.

"My pony is lame—leave me and save yourselves," Little Raven cried, bravely.

"We will die together," White Otter told him. "Come, we will kill these Pawnees."

They drew their bows and prepared to fight. The Pawnees were within arrow range. The nine scouts were abreast of them. The hunters were close behind them. The crippled pony was steadily losing ground. Their situation was desperate. An arrow passed between White Otter

and Sun Bird. Another grazed the flank of the injured pony. The Pawnees were almost upon them. The Sioux saw little chance of reaching the timber. Escape seemed impossible. They abandoned hope.

"Come, my brothers, we will show the Pawnees how to die," Sun Bird said, fiercely.

At that moment Little Raven's pony recovered from the effects of its fall. It sprang forward with new life. The injury appeared to have been only temporary. The Sioux yelled with joy. Their hopes revived. They determined to fight desperately for their lives. The Pawnee scouts were circling to get in front of them. White Otter shot his arrow at the foremost rider, and the Pawnee fell to the plain. Sun Bird's arrow sent a pony to its knees. Little Raven twisted about and wounded a Pawnee behind him. Then they raced forward and gained the lead. A volley of arrows came from the Pawnees. White Otter was struck in the shoulder. It was a slight wound, and he withdrew the arrow and shot it at his foes. Then the Sioux crouched low on their ponies, and rode toward the timber. They soon drew away from the exhausted ponies of the Pawnee hunters, but the scouts kept close beside them. The Sioux

were within several arrow flights of their goal, however, and their hopes grew stronger. They made savage use of their heavy riding quirts, and the Cheyenne ponies increased their speed. Stride by stride they drew away from the Pawnees until they finally carried their riders beyond bowshot.

"Keep them running, keep them running!" cried White Otter. "We will get away."

They reached the timber more than a bowshot ahead of the nearest Pawnees. Then they jumped from the trembling ponies, and prepared to fight off their foes. The latter, however, had failed to follow them. Aware that the Sioux had suddenly gained the advantage, the Pawnees were cautious about exposing themselves. They had stopped a long bowshot beyond the trees, and appeared to be holding a council.

"The Pawnees are afraid to come after us," declared Little Raven.

"We must be ready," White Otter told him.

In a few moments the Pawnees separated, and surrounded the grove. Then they circled around the timber, shouting taunts, and whooping savagely. The Sioux laughed at them.

"They sound very fierce," Sun Bird said, sarcastically.

"They are very cautious," laughed White Otter.

They wondered what the Pawnees proposed to do. They showed little inclination to approach. They had stopped riding. Many of them had dismounted. The Sioux watched closely. They feared that the crafty Pawnees might be attempting to trick them.

"I believe they will go away," Little Raven said, finally. "They did not come out to fight. They are hunters. They have killed many buffaloes. If they leave them back there, Ma-ya-sh, the wolf, will eat them. I believe some of those warriors will go back there to watch. I believe some of them will go to their village to send their people for that meat. My brothers, how do you feel about it?"

"I do not believe they will go away," Sun Bird told him.

"No, they will not go away," declared White Otter. "We have killed some of their friends. They are mad. They will stay here."

Soon afterward they saw a number of warriors leave the circle and ride nearer the grove. Then they stopped, and began to shout, and shake their weapons. In a few moments the rest of the Pawnees began to cry out threateningly. Then

a warrior on a spotted pony rode forward and began to talk. He spoke in loud tones, and Little Raven, who had been a captive in the Pawnee camp, understood many of his words.

"He is talking about those warriors who were making that noise," said Little Raven. "He is telling his friends how brave those young men are. He says they are coming in here to drive us out."

"Well, their friends will see that they are very foolish," declared Sun Bird.

"Do you know that warrior who is talking?" White Otter asked Little Raven.

"He talks like Jumping Horse, but he is too far away, I am not sure about it," said Little Raven. "I believe some of those warriors know who I am. It is bad. They will try to catch me."

"Hi, those foolish young men are getting ready to ride over here," said White Otter. "I believe they propose to throw themselves away. Watch out, they are coming."

A moment afterward the little company of Pawnees raced toward the timber. They were yelling and waving their bows, and their tribesmen were wild with excitement. The Sioux waited calmly at the edge of the timber. When the

riders drew near, however, they suddenly swerved and rode around the grove at top speed. They were within easy arrow range, and the Sioux instantly realized the significance of the maneuver.

"They are trying to make us shoot our arrows," said White Otter.

"We are not so foolish," laughed Sun Bird. "We will wait until they rush in."

When the riders saw that the trick had failed, they returned to their companions. Then the Pawnees crowded together for another council. The Sioux saw the warrior on the spotted pony talking excitedly, but they were unable to catch his words.

"I believe that man is the leader," declared White Otter. "He is telling his friends what to do."

"I believe he is Jumping Horse—he is a great war leader," said Little Raven.

"They are getting ready to rush in," Sun Bird declared, uneasily.

Then the same company of warriors again rode forward, shouting, and singing their war songs. They lashed their ponies into a gallop and rode recklessly toward the grove. This time, however, they did not turn aside.

"Get ready to fight," cried Sun Bird.

"Wait until they come close," cautioned White Otter.

There were ten Pawnees in the attacking party, and they kept close together and attempted to ride their ponies into the little patch of timber. The Sioux took shelter behind the trees, and waited until their foes were almost upon them. Then they raised the Dacotah war cry and shot their arrows. Two of the Pawnees toppled from their ponies. The others halted in dismay. Unable to see the Sioux, they were bewildered and alarmed. Before they could rally, the Sioux renewed the savage attack, and another rider slipped limply from his pony. Then the Pawnees lost hope and raced away in pursuit of the riderless ponies.

"Hi, we showed the Pawnees how to fight," Sun Bird cried, fiercely.

"Now they will try hard to kill us," White Otter warned him.

The defeat of the warriors who had attacked the Sioux threw the Pawnees into a rage. They began to race furiously around the grove, gradually drawing nearer until they were within close arrow range. Then they shot their arrows into

the timber. The Sioux were well sheltered, however, and had little fear of being hit.

"It is good, the Pawnees are sending us arrows," Little Raven said, mockingly.

"Keep watching," replied White Otter. "They are very mad. I believe they will rush in."

It was not long before the Sioux saw the motive for the attack. The Pawnees were attempting to divert their attention, while several daring scouts rode close up to the timber and carried off the three unfortunate warriors who had been killed. Then the entire company withdrew beyond bow range.

"The Pawnees have carried away their brothers," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps they are going to give up the fight."

"No, I do not believe it," White Otter replied, doubtfully.

The Pawnees had formed in a great circle about the timber. They were watching quietly, like a company of wolves that had surrounded their quarry but feared to attack. The Sioux tried to guess their intentions. Sun Bird and Little Raven hoped that they might suddenly withdraw, but White Otter was suspicious.

"I believe they will stay here until it gets

dark," he said. "Then they will try to creep up close. It is bad. We cannot help our friends, the brave Cheyennes."

The thought filled them with despair. For the moment their own peril was forgotten in their concern for the safety of Red Dog and his people. Having failed to find the Cheyenne hunters, the Sioux feared to think what might have happened to the little company in the distant village. The peril roused them.

"We have done a foolish thing," Sun Bird cried, hotly. "Now we must try to get away and do the thing we set out to do."

"I am thinking about it," White Otter told him.

"What do you propose to do?" inquired Sun Bird.

"When it grows dark we will try to get past the Pawnees," White Otter said, quietly.

CHAPTER XI

A NIGHT OF SURPRISES

LATE in the day half of the Pawnees withdrew toward the east. The Sioux felt certain that they had gone to watch the buffaloes which they had killed. The rest of the company came nearer to the timber. Then they began to taunt and threaten the Sioux. The latter took no notice of them. They waited anxiously for the end of the day, hoping that darkness might make it possible to escape.

"There are not so many Pawnees; perhaps we will be able to get away," Little Raven said, hopefully.

"They will watch sharp," White Otter told him.

Although the company had been reduced by half, the Sioux were still outnumbered by ten to one. They felt encouraged, however, when the Pawnees showed no further inclination to attack them. The sun was getting low in the west, and the day was passing. They were eager for night.

Then, as twilight was settling upon the plain, two scouts returned from the east. It was evi-

dent that they had brought word of great importance. The Pawnees appeared to be much excited. They had gathered about the scouts, and were talking earnestly. A few moments later the Sioux were amazed to see the entire company ride off toward the east.

"Watch out, it is a trick," said Sun Bird.

"I believe those riders came back to fool us," declared Little Raven.

White Otter offered no explanation. He was watching the Pawnees with grave interest. As they continued across the plain, an alarming possibility flashed through his mind. He turned excitedly to his companions.

"My brothers, I believe the Pawnees have found the Cheyenne hunters," he said.

"It is true," cried Sun Bird. "Perhaps the Cheyennes found those dead buffaloes. Come, we will follow the Pawnees, and find out about it."

"Wait," said White Otter. "We must be cautious. Perhaps scouts are watching to see what we propose to do. We will fool them. We will ride toward the Place-where-the-warm-wind-blows. Then when it gets dark we will circle around and come back to the place where the Pawnees killed those buffaloes."

"It is good," said Sun Bird.

They waited a few moments longer to make sure that the Pawnees had actually gone. Then, as they saw nothing of them, they mounted the ponies and rode toward the south. They held the ponies to an easy canter, and kept a sharp watch behind them. The Pawnees failed to appear.

"Wa-kan-tun-ka, the Great Mystery, has given us our lives," declared Sun Bird.

"It is true," said White Otter. "Perhaps we will be able to help the Cheyennes. I believe we will find them over there near those buffaloes."

At dark they turned sharply toward the east. They went a long way before they finally circled toward the north. They rode in silence, listening sharply for sounds from the Pawnees. The night was still.

"Perhaps the Cheyennes are getting ready to fight the Pawnees," suggested Sun Bird.

"That would be bad," declared White Otter. "If the Cheyennes are over there we must find them, and tell them to come away. They must go to help their people. There is little time. I am thinking about Red Dog, and the women and children in that camp. Perhaps the Kiowas have killed them."

When they finally drew near the place where the Pawnees had killed the buffaloes, they stopped to listen. Then, as they heard nothing to alarm them, they advanced with great caution. The sky was bright with stars, and they were able to see a short distance through the night. They knew that they were to the eastward of the place where they had first seen the buffaloes.

"Pretty soon we will circle around, and go over there," said White Otter.

They turned toward the west, and soon came in sight of the ridge from which they had discovered the Pawnee hunters. A few moments later a pony called within bowshot of them. They stopped in alarm. Then a voice challenged softly from the darkness. Little Raven recognized the Pawnee dialect. He immediately replied.

"It is good, my brother," he said in the Pawnee tongue. "Where are our enemies?"

"They are hiding over there among the trees," said the Pawnee. "Our brothers are watching."

"It is good," Little Raven told him. "We will go ahead. You must keep watching."

"Who is with you?" the Pawnee inquired, curiously.

"I hear something—keep quiet," Little Raven said, craftily.

The next moment they rode up the ridge. They listened uneasily, for they feared that the Pawnee might become suspicious and follow them. As they heard nothing to verify their fears, they crossed the ridge and moved stealthily out across the plain.

"Little Raven, you are as sharp as an old wolf," whispered White Otter. "You have done a great thing. Now we know that the Cheyennes are over there where the trees grow."

They also knew that sharp-eared Pawnee scouts were on guard, and they feared that it would be difficult to avoid them. The Sioux moved forward with the alert, nervous caution of frightened deer. They had not gone far when the ponies snorted and swerved aside. They stopped in alarm. Then they discovered one of the dead buffaloes. They had difficulty in persuading the ponies to pass it.

"Perhaps the Pawnees will hear us," whispered Sun Bird.

"Listen," cautioned White Otter.

Some one was riding toward them. Their hearts beat wildly. They feared to move. Many

anxious moments passed. Then the sounds gradually died away. What had become of the rider? Which way had he gone? They listened anxiously for a clew. It was a long time before they felt secure. Then, as the stillness continued, they moved slowly forward.

"The way is clear," White Otter whispered, finally.

They continued their perilous advance. Then they heard the cry of the big gray timber wolf, somewhere behind them. It was the favorite signal of the Pawnees. They feared that their foes had discovered them. They stopped and listened. In a few moments they heard the call farther out on the plain. The Pawnees were signaling. What did it mean?

"Perhaps that scout back there is telling his friends about us," said Sun Bird.

"No, no, he does not know about us," Little Raven assured him. "I fooled him. He took us for Pawnees."

"Perhaps the Pawnees are getting ready to rush against the Cheyennes," said White Otter.

The possibility startled them. They realized that if the Pawnees were closing in upon the grove there was not a moment to spare. They stared

anxiously into the night in an effort to locate the timber. It was hidden in the darkness. There was nothing to guide them in the proper direction. They knew that it would be easy to pass beyond it. The blunder might prove fatal.

"We must watch sharp," whispered White Otter.

They circled cautiously until they eventually saw the clump of trees showing darkly through the night. Then they stopped and listened suspiciously. They felt certain that Pawnee scouts were close at hand, and they feared colliding with them. The wolf calls had ceased. The plain was steeped in silence. The Sioux moved forward.

"If the Pawnees find us, we must ride fast toward those trees," said White Otter.

"Perhaps the Cheyennes will take us for Pawnees, and kill us," Little Raven told him.

"When we get close we will call out and tell them who we are," replied White Otter.

They advanced directly toward the timber. There was not a sound. The silence aroused their suspicions. Were the Pawnees, too, advancing toward the grove? They wondered if a company of those crafty foes had dismounted, and were creeping quietly forward under cover of the dark-

ness. Alert to catch the slightest sound, the three daring scouts moved on. When they were near the timber they stopped. They felt sure that the Cheyennes were watching at the edge of the grove. They believed that it would be perilous to go nearer without warning them. Still they feared to call. They listened for sounds from their friends. The grove was silent.

"Stay here with the ponies," White Otter whispered. "I will crawl ahead, and find our friends. If the Pawnees come, ride to the trees."

He left his pony with Sun Bird, and disappeared into the shadows. Realizing that the Cheyennes might take him for a foe, he feared to make the slightest sound. When he was close upon the grove he stopped to listen. The silence continued. White Otter dropped to his hands and knees and crept still nearer. He was within a few bow lengths of the timber. Each moment he expected to hear the subdued murmur of voices, or the restless stamping of ponies. He heard neither. The stillness puzzled him.

"Ho, Cheyennes, I am a Dacotah," he called, softly. "I have come to help you."

He waited in great suspense. There was no reply. Had the Cheyennes failed to hear him?

Were they unfamiliar with his words? He knew that many of the Cheyennes understood and spoke the Dacotah dialect. He crept forward until he was within leaping distance of the trees. Then he repeated his message. Again it went unanswered.

"It is mysterious," he murmured, uneasily.

While he waited, the cry of the timber wolf sounded across the plain. It made him impatient. He feared that the Pawnees were preparing to charge upon the grove. His fears were strengthened a moment afterward when the cry was repeated from another part of the plain. Twice more it rang ominously through the night; each time from a different direction. White Otter believed that the Pawnees were ready to advance. There was no time for further caution. He rose, and ran recklessly to the edge of the timber.

"Cheyennes, I am a Dacotah, hold your arrows!" he cried.

There was no one there. White Otter hurried into the grove, calling the Cheyennes. They failed to answer. He circled frantically through the timber. The grove was deserted. He was overcome with astonishment. For a moment he stood staring wildly into the shadows. Then he

was roused by the sound of ponies. They were close by. He ran to the plain. Sun Bird and Little Raven met him.

"There is no one here—the Cheyennes have gone," White Otter told them.

They heard him in amazed silence. The announcement overwhelmed them. They had expected to find a strong force of Cheyennes waiting at the edge of the grove.

"Well, there is no time to talk about it," Sun Bird said, anxiously. "Listen, the Pawnees are closing in. That is why we came ahead."

"Yes, I hear them," replied White Otter. "If we stay here they will surely catch us. We must try to get away."

"It will be a hard thing to do," Sun Bird told him. "The Pawnees are all around us."

They heard the boastful war songs of their foes echoing weirdly across the plain. It was evident that the Pawnees saw little need of caution. Believing that they had trapped the Cheyennes in the timber, they were riding boldly forward to attack them. For an instant the Sioux forgot their peril in their joy at the escape of their friends. Then they realized that they had run

into the trap from which the Cheyennes had apparently escaped.

"The Pawnees are getting close, we must go," said White Otter.

"Watch out for scouts," Sun Bird cautioned him.

Once again the Sioux rode carefully across the plain. This time they turned directly toward the east. They knew that the Pawnees were riding to meet them. There seemed little chance of avoiding an encounter. The possibilities filled them with gloomy misgivings. Once discovered, they feared that they would be surrounded and speedily annihilated. Still they believed that it would have been even more perilous to have taken shelter in the grove. Their one chance was to slip between the Pawnees in the darkness.

The Sioux were many arrow flights from the timber when they finally stopped to listen. The ponies raised their heads. The Sioux drew tightly on the lariats to prevent an outcry. Then they looked anxiously for their foes. They failed to discover them.

"Watch out, they are close by," whispered White Otter.

Then they heard the Pawnee ponies. They

were coming directly toward them. The Sioux crowded closely together, and waited. They had drawn their arrows, and were prepared to make a fierce fight. The moments seemed endless. At last they heard the Pawnees talking. An instant later a rider confronted them. Before he had recovered from his surprise, the Sioux swept him aside, and broke through the circle of foes. Lashing their ponies to desperate speed, they rode safely away before the Pawnees recovered from their bewilderment.

"Ride fast!" cried White Otter. "Some of those warriors will follow us."

They had not gone an arrow flight before they heard a company of Pawnees racing after them. Determined to hold their lead, they forced the ponies to still greater speed. Then they heard the great company of Pawnees thundering toward the timber. They chuckled gleefully.

"They will find out something big," laughed Sun Bird.

In a few moments the night rang with the shouts of the Pawnees. They were attacking the grove. The Sioux listened with keen satisfaction. Then the noise suddenly subsided. Having encountered no resistance, it was apparent that the bewildered

Pawnees were investigating. As the stillness continued, the Sioux felt certain that the Pawnees were racing silently about the plain in an effort to find their foes.

"Now we must fool those warriors behind us," said White Otter.

He turned sharply toward the north. Then they listened to learn if the Pawnees had followed them. Their hearts filled with joy as they heard them racing away toward the east.

"We are safe!" Little Raven cried, joyously.

"Yes, we got away from them," said White Otter.

CHAPTER XII

FRIENDS

HAVING eluded their pursuers, the Sioux drew the ponies to an easy canter and continued toward the north. They heard the Pawnees signaling far away across the plain. They were still searching for the Cheyennes. The Sioux wondered how the latter had escaped, and which way they had gone.

"It is mysterious," declared White Otter.

"I do not know how they got away, but I believe they are ahead of us," said Sun Bird. "The Pawnees found the buffaloes and chased them off. The Cheyennes know about it. I do not believe they will stay in this place. I believe they will go to their people."

"Well, we must keep going ahead," said White Otter. "When it gets light the Pawnees will begin to look around. If we stay here they will find us. We did not find the Cheyennes, but we must go away. It is bad."

They continued to ride until the night was half

gone, and then they stopped beside a little stream to rest the ponies. They believed that the Pawnees were far behind them, but they determined to take precautions. They took turns at watching until daylight. Then they looked anxiously across the plain for signs of their foes. They were nowhere in sight.

"It is good," declared Sun Bird. "Now we will go to the Cheyenne camp. Perhaps we will find our brothers there."

White Otter kept silent. He was troubled and depressed. His mind was filled with thoughts of Red Dog and his gallant little company. Having failed to bring the hunters to their assistance, White Otter had grave fears for their safety.

"Come, eat some of this meat, and then we will ride away," he told his companions.

While the ponies grazed, the Sioux ate heartily of the dried elk meat which Red Dog had given them. As they sat beside the stream they continued to watch the plain. They were about to ride away when White Otter discovered something moving along the top of a hill to the westward.

"Watch sharp, there is something over there," he said, suspiciously.

It was some moments before his companions discovered the distant object. Then they saw it moving slowly down the side of the ridge. They tried to identify it.

"It looks like Ma-ya-sh, the wolf," said Sun Bird.

"Perhaps it is a scout," suggested Little Raven.

"I believe it is Ma-ya-sh," White Otter told them. "See, it is moving down that hill. It does not see us. If it was a scout he would know about us. Then he would hide behind that hill and watch. I believe it is Ma-ya-sh."

"Yes, I believe it is Ma-ya-sh," said Sun Bird. "Now we know that there is no one over there. If the Pawnees were over there Ma-ya-sh would not show himself."

"It is true," replied White Otter.

Convinced that the object moving along the ridge really was a prairie wolf, they mounted the ponies and continued into the north. Hopeful that the Cheyenne hunters had preceded them, they determined to separate to search for the trail. Sun Bird rode farther to the westward, and Little Raven circled toward the east. As the plain was level, it was easy to keep within sight of one another.

The day was well advanced when White Otter saw Sun Bird riding in a circle. It was the danger signal, and White Otter immediately stopped. Then he, too, rode in a circle to warn Little Raven. When the latter saw him, White Otter galloped his pony toward Sun Bird. Little Raven also rode toward the west.

"What did you see?" White Otter inquired, anxiously, as he approached the Minneconjoux.

"Here are fresh pony tracks," Sun Bird told him.

The trail had come from the westward, and turned abruptly toward the north. It showed the hoof marks of many ponies. For some moments they studied it in silence.

"It must be the Cheyennes," Sun Bird said, finally.

"Yes, I believe those are the marks of the Cheyenne ponies," replied White Otter.

"What is it?" inquired Little Raven, who joined them at that moment.

"Here are the marks of some ponies," White Otter told him.

"I believe it is the trail of our brothers, the Cheyennes," said Little Raven.

"We are not sure about it," White Otter told

him. "Perhaps it is the Pawnees. Perhaps they passed by us when it was dark. Perhaps they circled over here and went ahead to catch the Cheyennes. We must not let them fool us again. We will watch out."

"You are a good leader," declared Sun Bird. "I see that what you say may be true. Yes, we will be cautious."

They rode rapidly along the trail. It was plain and easy to follow. They had not gone far, however, when they saw something which brought them to a sudden stop. A riderless pony had appeared on a knoll directly ahead of them. They watched suspiciously. At sight of them the pony raised its head and whinnied. Then it began to feed. It moved in an awkward and unnatural manner that aroused their fears.

"I believe some one is hiding behind that pony," declared White Otter.

"If he is a scout why did he go up on that high place?" Little Raven asked, curiously. "If he kept hiding we would not know about him."

"Perhaps he was coming down that hill before we saw him," said White Otter. "Then he saw us and hid behind his pony. Now he is trying to lead it over the top of that hill."

"Yes, I believe that is what he is trying to do," declared Sun Bird.

The pony was still feeding, and moving slowly toward the top of the hill. They felt sure that it was guided by some one behind it. It was far beyond arrow range. As they were in no danger, the Sioux waited to watch it.

"Perhaps it is a Cheyenne," said Sun Bird. "Come, White Otter, make the signal."

At that moment a warrior sprang upon the pony, and disappeared over the top of the hill. The Sioux had been unable to identify him. His appearance, however, caused them considerable anxiety. They realized that if he was a Cheyenne he had probably mistaken them for foes. In that event he would warn his companions, and they might race away before the Sioux could get in touch with them. If he was a Pawnee the possibilities were more alarming.

"It is bad," said Sun Bird. "If we go ahead, perhaps we will run into the Pawnees. If we hold back perhaps our brothers, the Cheyennes, will ride away from us."

"We will go ahead," said White Otter.

They approached the hill with great care. They watched closely before they ventured up the slope.

When they reached the top they saw a large company of horsemen, far away across the plain. They appeared to be watching the hill. The Sioux believed the scout had warned them.

"Come, make the signal," said Sun Bird. "We will see what comes of it."

"Yes, make the signal," urged Little Raven. "I believe they are Cheyennes."

White Otter raised his hands high above his head. It was the sign for peace. He repeated the signal several times. Then he rode his pony part way down the hill, and returned to the top. In the meantime Sun Bird had waved his robe up and down, and then spread it upon the ground. He, too, repeated the signal. It was an invitation to come and talk. Having thus proclaimed their peaceful intentions, and invited the strangers to meet them, the Sioux watched for an answer to the signals. The horsemen made no reply.

"They are cautious," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps they take us for Pawnees."

"Perhaps it is the Pawnees after all," declared Little Raven.

"Well, they are far away, they cannot catch us," White Otter told them. "We will go toward

them. Then we will see what they propose to do."

They rode a bowshot across the plain. Then they stopped and repeated the signals. In a few moments a rider separated from his companions, and replied to the signs. He raised his hands above his head. Then he suddenly swept his right hand toward the ground. It, too, was an invitation to approach and talk.

"They are trying to draw us over there," said Sun Bird. "No, we are not so foolish. We will wait until we see who they are."

"It is the only thing to do," agreed White Otter.

Having previously mistaken the Pawnees for the Cheyennes, the Sioux determined to be careful. Sun Bird dismounted and again signaled with his robe. Then they waited. Many moments passed before they received an answer. Then three riders started slowly across the plain.

"It is too many, watch out," cautioned White Otter. "Come, we will tell them what to do. Follow me."

The Sioux rode forward abreast. When they had gone a short distance, they turned and rode back. Then White Otter rode forward alone.

The signal was meant to warn the approaching horsemen that one only must come to the council. The strangers, however, ignored the suggestion. All three continued toward the Sioux. White Otter turned and cantered toward his friends.

"Come," he said. "I believe those people are trying to fool us."

They rode back toward the hill. Their action made it plain that they mistrusted the intentions of the strangers. The latter seemed to understand. They had stopped, and were holding their hands above their heads to proclaim their peaceful intentions. The Sioux continued toward the hill. Then two of the horsemen turned about, and cantered toward their companions. The third rider still waited with his hands raised.

"It is good," cried White Otter. "I will go and find out who he is."

"Be cautious," Sun Bird warned him.

"I will watch out," declared White Otter.

He turned his pony, and rode toward the stranger. The latter immediately lowered his arms. Sun Bird and Little Raven watched anxiously. White Otter advanced with great caution. He was making every effort to identify the horseman before he came within arrow range. Neither

of them had drawn their weapons. To have approached weapons in hand would have been evidence of suspicion and lack of faith. When they finally came within bow range, they stopped and examined each other with close attention. Then White Otter suddenly recognized a friend.

"Ho, Running Crow, now I see who you are," he cried, eagerly.

"Hi, hi, it is my brother, White Otter," shouted the Cheyenne.

A moment afterward they met and clasped hands. The Cheyenne was a noted warrior and scout with whom White Otter had shared several perilous adventures. Aware that White Otter had found a friend, Sun Bird and Little Raven immediately rode forward to join them.

"Ho, my brothers, Running Crow cried cordially. "I see that one of you is Sun Bird. I do not know about that other warrior."

"He is my brother, Little Raven," said Sun Bird. "Little Raven is a great warrior."

"My brothers, how do you come to be in this place?" Running Crow inquired, anxiously.

"Red Dog sent us to find you," White Otter said, soberly.

"Has something bad happened to our people?" Running Crow asked quickly.

"The Kiowas were all around the camp," said White Otter. "It was a great war party. I believe your people are in much danger."

The Cheyenne remained silent. For some moments he stared wildly into the eyes of the Ogalala. The Sioux watched him with pity. They knew that he was striving to master his grief before he spoke.

"When did you leave my people?" he asked, finally.

"Two suns have passed since we came away from your village," White Otter told him.

"It is bad, it is bad," Running Crow declared gloomily. "Come, we will go and tell my brothers about it."

"Who is the leader?" inquired Sun Bird, as they rode toward the Cheyennes.

"I am the leader," said Running Crow.

The Sioux found many old friends and allies among the Cheyennes. There was Red Crane, and Turns Around, and Black Beaver, and Sitting Bear and Fighting Wolf and several more. Some were unable to speak the Dacotah dialect, but they clasped hands with the young scouts and made it

plain that they were glad to see them. Then Running Crow addressed his warriors.

"My brothers, I have bad words," he said. "There is little time to talk. Listen sharp. These brave Dacotahs came here to find us. Red Dog sent them. The Kiowas were all around our village. They say it was a great war party. Two suns have passed since the Dacotahs came away. I do not know what has happened to our people. Perhaps the Kiowas have killed them. Come, my brothers, we must ride fast to the camp."

CHAPTER XIII

THE ABANDONED CAMP

EARLY the following day the Cheyennes came in sight of their village. They looked anxiously across the plain, hoping to see something which would quiet their fears. They were a long way off, however, and it was impossible to learn what they wished to know. They rode furiously toward the lodges. As they approached they began to shout fiercely, and look for the Kiowas. There was no response from the camp.

"It is bad," Running Crow cried, in alarm.

When they finally came within bowshot, they suddenly realized that the village was deserted. Their hopes died at the thought. They rode frantically to the edge of the camp. It bore grim testimony to the success of the Kiowa attack. The corral was empty. Many of the lodges were burned. Still, silent forms lay about the village. A dog howled dismally.

"Our people have been wiped away," Running Crow cried, dolefully, as he rode his frightened pony into the camp.

The Cheyennes followed silently behind their leader. They looked solemnly upon the valiant friends who had given their lives in defense of the village. Grief overcame them. They were unable to speak.

"It is bad, it is bad," White Otter said, bitterly. "What I was thinking about has come to pass. Red Dog and his people have been killed."

The Sioux moved about the camp with bowed heads. It was a scene which stirred their sympathy and filled them with gloom. Many of the Cheyennes had dismounted, and were entering the lodges which had escaped the flames. It was evident that they were searching for friends and relatives whom they had failed to find in the camp. Other riders were searching about the plain in the vicinity of the village. Then Running Crow suddenly called them to the center of the camp.

"My brothers, a terrible thing has happened to our people," he said. "The ponies are gone. The lodges are burned. Many brave friends are dead. Our enemies, the Kiowas, have done this thing! Remember it. Keep it in your hearts. Keep thinking about it. It is useless to talk about it. You are Cheyennes. You see what I see. You feel what I feel. It is enough.

"My brothers, listen sharp. Many brave warriors are lying here, but many of our people are missing. Where are the women? Where are the children? Where is Red Dog? Where is Ghost Bear? Where are Cloud Eagle, and Two Dogs, and Walks Alone, and Hairy Robe and Lame Bear? Where are Painted Weasel, and Running Buffalo, and Thunder Hawk and White Horse? What has become of those people?——"

"I will tell you!" cried a voice from the edge of the camp.

The Cheyennes turned in alarm. Old Ghost Bear, the Medicine Man, was tottering into the village. They gazed upon him with frightened, superstitious eyes. He looked like one who was dead. He stood before them, swaying dizzily, and holding his hand across his eyes. The Cheyennes waited silently for him to speak. It was some moments before he was able to control himself.

"Cheyennes, Cheyennes, Cheyennes, look about you!" he cried. "Everything has been wiped away. The Kiowas were too strong for us. We held them off a long time. We waited for you. You did not come. Then the Kiowas got into the village. We fought hard, but we could not drive

them out. They killed many of our people. They ran off the ponies. They burned the lodges."

Ghost Bear suddenly covered his face with his hands, while his aged body shook with grief. The Cheyennes looked upon him with compassion. It was the first time they had seen him betray emotion, and they realized that the great catastrophe had broken his heart. They feared he was about to die. He had dropped to his knees, and was moaning and sobbing like a child. Running Crow went forward and placed his hand upon him. Ghost Bear dropped his hands, and looked wildly at his tribesman.

"Come," said Running Crow. "You are a great Medicine Person. You must help us. Tell us what has become of the women and children. Tell us what has become of Red Dog. Tell us what has become of all those warriors."

"Yes, yes, I will tell you about it," said Ghost Bear, as he struggled to his feet.

He gave a thrilling account of the desperate battle with the Kiowas. The Cheyennes listened with breathless interest. Their eyes flashed as he told how Red Dog got the women and children safely out of the camp. Then he told how the Kiowas had entered the village, and speedily over-

whelmed the little company of Cheyennes. He said that some of the Cheyennes reached the ponies, and fought their way from the camp. He saw Red Dog kill two Kiowas.

"Then I ran away, and I do not know what became of Red Dog and those brave warriors," Ghost Bear continued. "Perhaps they were killed. I ran a long ways. Then I crawled into some bushes. It was very dark, and the Kiowas could not find me. I heard them passing around me many times. Then they went away I heard them running off the ponies, and singing the war songs. Pretty soon I saw the lodges burning. I felt very bad. Well, my brothers, I waited in those bushes until you came here. At first I took you for the Kiowas. I wanted to die, so I came to the village. Then I saw you. Now I have told you all I know about it."

"Ghost Bear, you have told us how this thing happened," said Running Crow. "You have told how the women and children got away. It is good. You say you do not know what became of Red Dog and those warriors. We will try to find out about them."

Running Crow called several warriors, and told them to circle far out over the plain in a search

for the missing Cheyennes. He feared that they might have been killed beyond the camp. The scouts rode away. The Cheyennes watched them closely, as they rode carefully about the plain. It was a long time before they returned. They said that they had found the tracks of many ponies going toward the north. They declared that there were no dead Cheyennes outside of the camp.

"It is good," cried Running Crow. "I believe our brothers got away. Perhaps they have gone into the country of the Ogalalas. I believe Red Dog went with them."

As he finished speaking, a warrior at the edge of the camp cried out and said that several riders were approaching from the north. The Cheyennes hurried from the village to see them. The riders instantly discovered them, and stopped the ponies. There were three. They were far away.

"I believe they are our people," Running Crow declared, excitedly. "They are coming back to find out about this thing. Come, we must let them know who we are."

One of the warriors rode forward and raised his arm high above his head. Then he rode rapidly to and fro. It was the rallying signal. A moment afterward the riders galloped forward.

As they came nearer, they again became cautious. Then the Cheyennes began to call to them. They heard them, and raced the ponies toward the camp. As they came within arrow range, the Cheyennes recognized them. They were Painted Weasel, and Thunder Hawk and White Horse.

"Our brothers have come back—it is good," cried the Cheyennes. "Now we will find out about this thing."

"Well, my brothers, I see that you are alive—it is good," said Running Crow, as he met them at the edge of the camp.

"There are only a few of us left," Painted Weasel replied, soberly.

"Where are the warriors who were with you?" inquired Running Crow.

"They are following our people toward the lodges of the Ogalalas," Painted Weasel told him.

"Is Red Dog with them?" Running Crow asked, anxiously.

"No," said Painted Weasel. "We do not know what became of him. We came back here to find out about it. He was with us when we were fighting to get away. He was very brave. I saw him kill two Kiowas."

"Yes, yes, I saw him kill them," cried old Ghost Bear.

"What became of him?" Painted Weasel asked him.

"I cannot tell you that," said Ghost Bear. "I ran out of the village, and did not see any more of him."

"I was close beside him," declared Thunder Hawk. "Then the Kiowas rushed at me, and I had a hard time of it. When I looked around I did not see anything more of Red Dog. Then I heard my brothers riding away I went after them. I thought Red Dog was with them. Well, my brothers, he was not there. No one knew anything about him."

"Perhaps he was killed," said White Horse. "Did you look all around?"

"Yes, we looked sharp," Running Crow told him. "We did not find him."

"Then I believe the Kiowas must have carried him off," said Painted Weasel.

The Cheyennes were crushed by the possibility. Dismay kept them silent. They knew only too well the fate that awaited Red Dog if he had fallen into the hands of his enemies. Their courage rose

at thought of his peril. They determined to save him, or avenge his death.

"Yes, my brothers, I believe the Kiowas have carried off Red Dog," White Horse told them. "We must try to save him. There is only one thing to do. We must go to the Kiowa Camp, and try to take him away."

"My brothers, I have listened to your words—they are good," said Running Crow. "I believe the Kiowas caught Red Dog. It is bad. He is our chief. He has done many good things for his people. We must try to help him. Now I will tell you how I feel about it. White Otter is a great war chief of the Ogalalas. He has done many big things. He has helped us fight the Pawnees. He has helped us fight the Kiowas. We know that he is a good war leader. He has been to the Pawnee village. He took away the great chief Wolf Robe and that great Medicine Person, Yellow Horse. He has been to the Kiowa camp. He went into that camp and ran off ponies. White Otter knows how to do big things. My brothers, I am going to ask this great Ogalala war chief to lead us to the Kiowa camp."

"It is good!" cried the Cheyennes. "White Otter is a great chief. He must be the leader."

"Come, White Otter, tell us how you feel about it," said Running Crow.

"My brothers, I will lead you to the Kiowa camp," White Otter told them. "Your people are my friends. We came here to help you. The Kiowas are our enemies. They have killed many of your people. They have burned your lodges. They have run off your ponies. I believe they have carried away your chief. Red Dog is my friend. My heart is bad against the Kiowas. I am going to the Kiowa camp to find out about Red Dog. Yes, Cheyennes, I will lead you to fight our enemies. I believe my people will come to help us."

"Hi, hi!" cried Running Crow.

When they learned that the Ogalala would lead them against the Kiowas, the Cheyennes felt sure of victory. They had great confidence in his ability, for his exploits had made him famous. For the moment they forgot their grief, as they thrilled at the call of the war trail. Their hearts burned with a fierce desire for vengeance, and they believed that White Otter would give them an opportunity to retaliate upon their foes. The thought stirred them. They began to sing the war songs, and make savage threats against the

Kiowas. Some of the younger warriors began to dance. The village rang with their shouts. The older men soon yielded to the excitement. In a few moments the entire company joined in the wild antics of the war dance.

White Otter took no part. He, too, longed to shout, and sing, and dance and make fierce threats against his foes, but he realized that it was not the part of a great chief to yield to his emotions. Sun Bird and Little Raven, however, took a prominent part in the dance. White Otter heard their voices rising in the fierce Dacotah war cry, and his blood tingled at the sound.

Then the Cheyennes finally brought the wild ceremony to an end, and stood quietly beside their ponies, awaiting instruction from the Ogalala chief. White Otter looked upon them with admiration. They were a splendid body of warriors, and he was proud to command them. Tall and sinewy, their stern faces and flashing eyes proclaimed their courage. They compared favorably with the famous Dacotah fighting men, and having seen them in battle White Otter knew that they were equally bold and indomitable.

"Cheyennes, I see that you are ready," said White Otter. "It is good. You have made me the

leader. I will tell you how I feel about this thing. I believe my people will come here to help us. Some of you must stay here to watch for them. Then you must bring them to the Kiowa camp. The rest of us will go ahead to fight the Kiowas. Their village is two sun's travel away. They have reached their lodges. We must follow them to their camp. When we get there I will tell you what to do. I have finished."

As Running Crow translated the words, White Otter saw disappointment on the faces of the Cheyennes. They began to talk softly to one another. He knew at once that they were discussing who should be left behind to watch. Each hoped to avoid the task. All wished to fight the Kiowas. Then Ghost Bear suddenly offered a solution of the difficulty.

"Listen, my brothers," he cried, eagerly. "All of you are young men. A young man must fight. I am old. I cannot ride the war ponies. I will stay here and watch for the Ogalalas. If they come I will tell them where to find you."

"If you stay here alone, perhaps something bad will happen to you," Running Crow told him.

"No, no, nothing will happen to me," Ghost Bear assured him. "I will put away those brave

warriors who are lying here. Then I will wait for the Ogalalas. There is meat here. The Kiowas did not find it. I will have plenty to eat. I am a Medicine Person, nothing can harm me. If enemies come here, I will run away and hide in the bushes. Come, my brothers, ride away and leave me. There is little time."

"Ghost Bear, you are very brave," declared White Otter, when Running Crow told him of the old Medicine Man's proposal.

A few moments later the Cheyenne war party left the camp. They rode across the plain, singing their war songs, and old Ghost Bear cackled gleefully as he heard them. He watched until they were beyond range of his dim old eyes. Then he moved slowly into the village. He stopped and gazed sadly upon the forms of his friends.

"Listen, you Silent People," he cried. "The Kiowas have sent you on The Long Trail. You were very brave. Our people will talk about you a long time. Now our brothers have gone to kill many Kiowas. White Otter, the great war chief of the Ogalalas, is the leader. Soon you will hear a great noise. You will know it is the Kiowas. They will cry like women when our brothers begin to kill them. Then you must laugh at them."

CHAPTER XIV

IN PURSUIT OF THE KIOWAS

THE Kiowa trail was easy to follow, for the great herd of ponies had left many tracks. White Otter felt sure that the Kiowas would lose little time in getting to their camp. The trail confirmed his decision. It led toward the southeast, the direction of the Kiowa village. White Otter believed that it would be useless to attempt to overtake his foes. Some of the younger, more impulsive warriors were eager to race ahead, but White Otter held them back.

"It is useless to kill your ponies," he told them. "The Kiowas have reached their lodges."

When they had passed beyond sight of the Cheyenne village, he began to take precautions. Two possibilities suggested themselves. He realized that the Kiowas might have expected pursuit and left scouts behind to watch their trail. He also knew that the Pawnees were abroad, and he feared that they might have followed the trail of the Cheyenne hunters. He sent scouts to ride ahead and on both sides of the war party.

"If you see anything, tell us about it," he told them.

Then the war party continued across the plain. White Otter realized that while his force was large enough for a sudden attack against the Kiowa camp, it was not sufficiently strong to risk a fight in the open. Besides, he hoped to accomplish his purpose without bringing further loss upon the Cheyennes.

The day passed without alarm Toward sunset they saw one of the scouts returning. They believed he had discovered something. White Otter called Running Crow to act as interpreter.

"He says he saw some buffaloes over there," said Running Crow, as he pointed toward the south.

"Then I believe the Pawnees are near," White Otter told him. "We must watch out for them. Tell your brother to go back there, and keep watching. Tell him when it gets dark to come to the place where many trees grow. He will find us there."

Running Crow repeated the instructions, and the scout rode away. It was not long before one

of the scouts who was riding in advance came back. He was a warrior named Standing Bull, who spoke the Sioux dialect.

"We looked sharp but we did not see anything," he told White Otter. "Sitting Bear and Black Beaver are riding ahead. I came back to find out where to find you when it gets dark."

"You will find us at the place where many trees grow," White Otter told him. "Do you know that place?"

"Yes, I know it," said Standing Bull. "There is good water there."

He rode ahead to join his companions. He had barely gone before one of the other scouts joined the war party. He, too, reported that he had seen nothing to arouse suspicion. When he learned where the Cheyennes planned to spend the night he rode away.

"It is good," said Running Crow, who rode beside White Otter. "Our brothers have seen nothing but some buffaloes."

"Perhaps those buffaloes will bring the Pawnees," replied White Otter.

"No, my brother, I do not believe we will see the Wolf People," Running Crow told him. "They have killed many buffaloes. They have

plenty of meat. I believe they will take it to their people."

Shortly afterward they came in sight of a large grove of aspens. It was a familiar camp site, and White Otter had been there before. As they drew near the timber they stopped, while scouts went forward to investigate. They rode cautiously about the grove to make sure that it was free of foes. The Cheyennes watched closely. They realized that it offered a tempting hiding place to Kiowa scouts. One of the riders finally disappeared into the timber. A few moments afterward he signaled the war party to advance.

"The way is clear," said Running Crow.

When the Cheyennes entered the grove the scouts showed them a number of fresh pony tracks. White Otter examined them with much interest. They seemed to cause him considerable uneasiness.

"Well, my brother, how do you feel about those tracks?" Sun Bird asked him.

"It looks bad," said White Otter. "There were three ponies in this place. It was not long ago. Perhaps it was Kiowa scouts. Perhaps they saw us coming here. Perhaps they have gone to tell their people about it. We must watch out."

"If the Kiowas come here the scouts will tell us about it," said Running Crow.

"Yes, that is true," replied White Otter. "But some one must keep watching out there on the plain. The Kiowas are sharp. Perhaps they will creep past the scouts."

Several warriors offered to go out on the plain to watch. Then the Cheyennes picketed their ponies, and lay down to rest. For two days they had ridden hard, and they were tired and sore.

"White Otter, I have something bad to tell you," Sun Bird said, as he seated himself beside the Ogalala.

White Otter turned inquiringly.

"The Kiowas took away our ponies," said Sun Bird. "Painted Weasel told me about it. Running Buffalo found Little Raven's pony, but our ponies are with the Kiowas."

"Hi, that is bad," cried White Otter. "Well, I will get back my pony. Curly Horse, your chief, gave it to me. I will not let it go. It is the fastest pony I ever rode. Yes, I will take it away from the Kiowas."

"We will get them back," Sun Bird declared, confidently. "My pony is very fast. I will not let the Kiowas keep it."

The loss of the ponies saddened them. White Otter felt sure that neither friend nor foe owned a pony with the speed and endurance of the little piebald which he had received from the Minneconjoux chief. Sun Bird was equally attached to the little roan. It had beaten most of the ponies in the Minneconjoux camp, and had carried him to safety in several thrilling escapes from his foes.

"How did the Kiowas get those ponies?" White Otter asked, suddenly.

"Painted Weasel says that all the war ponies were in the camp," said Sun Bird. "When the Kiowas ran into the village, the Cheyennes ran to get the ponies. They had a big fight. The Kiowas got many of those ponies. Our ponies were with those ponies they took away."

The sun had disappeared, and the twilight shadows were forming on the plain. Many of the Cheyennes were asleep. The ponies had finished feeding, and most of them were lying down. The camp was in peaceful repose. White Otter looked on with satisfaction.

"It is good," he said. "The Cheyennes and their ponies are resting. They will be strong to fight."

Then, as night closed down, White Otter left his companions and seated himself at the edge of the grove. He was serious and thoughtful. He suddenly realized his responsibility. The Cheyennes had placed themselves under his leadership. They were depending upon him to save their chief. He knew the difficulties and perils which were before him. He wondered if he would be able to overcome them. For a moment he felt doubtful. Would he fail? Would he bring another staggering disaster upon the unfortunate Cheyennes? He grew weak at the thought. Then he realized that he was yielding to fear. The idea roused him. He felt ashamed. He rallied from the mood. He recalled that he had overcome the Kiowas under still greater difficulties. It restored his confidence. His courage returned. He laughed away his fears.

"I am an Ogalala," he said, proudly. "I will do what I have set out to do."

He rose, and turned his face toward the heavens. He asked Wa-kan-tun-ka, the Great Mystery, to give him strength and courage to overcome his enemies. Then he returned to his friends. He found Sun Bird and Little Raven asleep. Run-

ning Crow was seated a short distance away. White Otter joined him.

"My brother, why are you awake?" White Otter asked. "I am the leader. I will watch. Come, Running Crow, lie down and sleep."

"No, I cannot sleep," Running Crow told him. "My heart is heavy. I am thinking about my people. I am thinking about my friends who were killed by the Kiowas. I am thinking about Red Dog. Perhaps the Kiowas have killed him."

White Otter remained silent. The words of Running Crow revived his fears. He knew the bitter enmity between the Kiowas and the Cheyennes, and he feared that Red Dog might have been killed soon after entering the camp. Running Crow seemed to understand the significance of his silence.

"I see that you believe Red Dog is dead," Running Crow said, sharply.

"No, I do not believe it," White Otter told him. "We cannot tell about it until we get to the Kiowa camp. I——"

He ceased speaking. A pony had called, close at hand. Running Crow sprang to his feet. The Cheyennes sat up to listen. White Otter stared anxiously into the night.

"It is one of the scouts," said Running Crow.

"Watch," White Otter cautioned him.

For some moments all was still. Then they heard some one riding toward them. They had little doubt that it was a scout, but they were cautious. The Cheyennes had risen and moved to the edge of the grove. The rider had stopped. They became suspicious. They waited anxiously for a signal. At last it came.

"Do not be afraid, my brothers," said a familiar voice.

A moment later Fighting Wolf, one of the scouts, appeared out of the darkness. Running Crow began to talk with him. The Cheyennes listened eagerly. The Sioux, however, were unable to understand his words.

"Fighting Wolf says that he heard the call of the great gray wolf," Running Crow told White Otter. "It was far away."

"The Pawnees made that call," declared White Otter. "We will be cautious."

At dawn the scouts returned to the grove. With the exception of Fighting Wolf and his companions who had heard the wolf call, they declared that the night had passed without alarm. White Otter felt considerably encouraged. He believed that the Kiowas had failed to guard their trail.

It was evident that they had little fear of being overtaken before they reached their camp.

"I believe they will keep a sharp watch around their village," White Otter told Running Crow.

The sun had not appeared when the war party left the grove and cantered away toward the Kiowa camp. White Otter asked Running Crow to select the most expert warriors to ride in advance, as he believed there was great danger of encountering Kiowa scouts. When half of the day had passed, White Otter began to notice familiar landmarks which told him that he was approaching the vicinity of the Kiowa camp. He became more cautious.

"We are getting close to our enemies," he told Running Crow.

Soon afterward they saw the famous scout, Painted Weasel, racing toward them. White Otter immediately called a halt. They watched the scout with considerable anxiety. He was lashing his pony, and pointing behind him.

"Perhaps the Kiowas are coming," they told one another.

When Painted Weasel came within shouting distance he called out to White Otter in the Sioux tongue.

"So-ta, so-ta!" he cried.

"Painted Weasel says smoke," White Otter told them.

"My brother, we saw some smoke a long way ahead of us," Painted Weasel said, excitedly. "We were peeping over the top of a hill. We saw many trees. We were watching sharp. Then I saw that smoke. I believe the Kiowa camp is over there. I came to tell you about it."

"Yes, it is true," White Otter told him. "The camp is in that place. I know about it. Where are your brothers?"

"Standing Bull and Red Crane are watching."

"It is good," said White Otter. "Running Crow, tell your people about it."

The Cheyennes became greatly excited. Almost within sight of the Kiowa camp, they were eager to approach and begin the fight. Some of the warriors proposed riding back to the ridge with Painted Weasel to reconnoiter. White Otter kept them back.

"Cheyennes, you have made me the leader," he cried. "You must do as I tell you. Now listen to my words. Red Dog your chief is in that camp. If you let the Kiowas know that we are here, Red Dog will be killed. There is only one way to do

this thing. We must hide until it gets dark. Then some of us will go ahead and try to find out something. There is a gully over there toward the Place-where-the-warm-wind-blows. I will take you over there. It is a good place to hide in. Before we go there we must call in our brothers, and tell them about it."

Running Crow repeated the words to his tribesmen. They heartily indorsed the plan.

"The Ogalala is a great leader," they said.

Then a warrior rode out on each side of the war party and galloped his pony in a circle. The scouts were visible, far away across the plain. They soon saw the riders and understood the signals. In a few moments the Cheyennes saw them riding in. In the meantime Painted Weasel had ridden away to acquaint his companions with the plans of the war party.

"Now we will go to that gully," said White Otter.

He circled more to the southward, and led them across the plain at a brisk canter. The scouts finally overtook them, and rode along beside them. They kept a sharp watch for their foes, but except for a few stray bunches of antelopes, the plain appeared lifeless. The day was well advanced

when they eventually reached a deep ravine that extended far across the plain.

"We will hide here and watch until it gets dark," White Otter told them.

Guards were appointed to watch the ponies, and then most of the warriors crawled up the side of the ravine to watch the plain. They looked eagerly into the east in the hope of discovering smoke from the Kiowa camp.

"Perhaps it has died out; perhaps it is too far away," Running Crow told them.

Sun Bird and Little Raven had joined White Otter. The three young scouts lay beside each other at the top of the ravine. They stared silently across the plain. The sun had set, and the evening shadows were already gathering in the east.

"See, see, some one is riding this way," Little Raven cried suddenly.

Three horsemen were racing toward the ravine. The Cheyennes were talking excitedly. They felt certain that the riders were the scouts who had gone to watch from the ridge to the eastward. The Sioux also believed that Painted Weasel and his companions were returning with word of some

important discovery. Running Crow hastened to join White Otter.

"It looks bad," he said suspiciously. "Something has happened."

"Pretty soon we will know about it," White Otter said, quietly.

As the scouts approached the ravine, the foremost rider raised his hand above his head as a token of friendship. Then they recognized him as Painted Weasel. When he reached them he called for White Otter.

"Here is White Otter," Running Crow told him.

"The Kiowa scouts have gone to that hill to watch," said Painted Weasel. "We got away before they saw us."

"It is good," replied White Otter.

"Now it will be hard to get near the camp," said Running Crow.

"We will fool them," White Otter assured him.

CHAPTER XV

DARING SCOUTS

AT dark White Otter called the Cheyennes to assemble in the ravine. Then he announced his plans.

"My brothers, I am going to the Kiowa camp to find out about Red Dog," he said. "I will try to find out about the ponies. Then I will come back and tell you what to do. You must wait here. Keep a sharp watch. Do not let the Kiowas find you. If you hear them coming, ride away to that place where the trees are. If I do not come back before another sun goes away you will know that something bad has happened to me. I will watch out. I do not believe the Kiowas will catch me. Now I am going to ask Sun Bird and Little Raven to go with me. Sun Bird knows about that camp. Little Raven will help us with the ponies. Now, my friends, I am going away. Pretty soon I will come back and tell you about Red Dog."

When Running Crow told the plan to the Cheyennes, they expressed their disapproval. Most of them wished to accompany White Otter on the

perilous expedition. They believed that it would be foolhardy for the three Sioux to go without them.

"White Otter, I will tell you how my brothers feel about this thing," said Running Crow. "They say that it would be foolish for the Dacotahs to go to that camp alone. The Kiowas are watching. Perhaps you will meet them. There will be only three of you. There will be many Kiowas. Perhaps you will be killed. Then your people will say, 'The Cheyennes held back. They were afraid. They sent our brothers ahead to die.' Then we would feel bad. Come, take some of these brave warriors with you. Then if the Kiowas come after you, it will be easy to get away."

"Running Crow, I have listened to your words," replied White Otter. "If too many of us go to do this thing, the Kiowas will hear us. We must not let them know that we are here until we are ready to rush into the camp. Do not feel afraid. Nothing will happen to me. Once I went to that camp with my brother Sun Bird, and took away ponies. I will go there again."

"Well, my brother, I see that you propose to go ahead with this thing, so I will not talk any more against it," said Running Crow.

"It is good," declared White Otter.

Soon afterward the three Sioux scouts rode away. When they were a bowshot from the ravine White Otter turned toward the south. He felt quite certain that the Kiowas would expect the Cheyennes from the north or the west, and he believed it would be safer to approach the camp from the southward.

"Yes, it is the best way to go," said Sun Bird.

They eventually circled toward the east, and crossed the ridge without encountering their foes. Then they rode cautiously in the direction of the Kiowa camp. They knew that it was located beside a wide stream to the eastward of another low ridge. Having passed the scouts, the Sioux hoped to reach the second ridge without being discovered. It seemed a long time before it finally loomed up before them. Then they stopped. The camp was only a short distance away. White Otter suddenly began to sniff.

"So-ta, smoke," he said.

The wind was blowing toward them, and they caught the odor from the Kiowa fires. They spent some time listening for voices from the ridge. The way appeared to be clear. They rode slowly forward. They had gone only a short distance

when White Otter suddenly stopped his pony, and dismounted.

"It would be foolish to ride closer to that place," he said, softly. "I believe scouts are watching on the top of that hill. If we ride over there they will hear the ponies. I will tell you what I propose to do. Little Raven, you must stay here with the ponies. Sun Bird, you must go ahead with me. Little Raven, you must listen sharp. If you hear anyone coming toward you ride away. Do not let the Kiowas know who you are. When we come back we will make the call of To-ka-la, the little gray fox. Now we will go ahead."

"I will keep your words," Little Raven said, quietly.

White Otter and Sun Bird disappeared. A few moments later they stopped at the base of the ridge to listen. The silence reassured them, and they crawled cautiously up the slope. Once at the top, they looked eagerly toward the east. They located the camp by the glow from the fires. Then they saw them twinkling far away among the trees. They watched with the grim, silent satisfaction of a panther that has discovered its prey.

"Come," whispered White Otter. "We will go

down there and look for the ponies. Then we will crawl up to the camp and try to find out about Red Dog."

They moved carefully down the ridge, and hurried across the plain. On a former expedition they had learned that the Kiowas pastured their ponies to the northward of the camp, and they turned in that direction. They had no thought of attempting to run off the ponies, however, for they realized that such a maneuver would cost the life of the Cheyenne chief. Besides, they felt certain that the piebald and the roan and the best of the Cheyenne war ponies had been taken to the camp for safe keeping. They believed that the rest of the stolen ponies were with the great herd of Kiowa ponies that were turned loose upon the plain in the vicinity of the village. White Otter was eager to locate them so that the Cheyennes would know exactly where to find them when they came to attack the camp.

"Perhaps the Kiowas drove them close to the lodges," suggested Sun Bird.

"Yes, it may be true," said White Otter.

They circled carefully about the plain, searching for the ponies, but were unable to find them. They finally became convinced that the crafty Kiowas

had driven them close to the camp. It was the usual precaution in times of danger.

"Well, we will not look any more," said White Otter. "The night is passing. There is little time. Come, my brother, we will creep up close to the camp. Perhaps we will find the ponies there."

They turned toward the Kiowa village, and advanced with great caution. They stopped many times to make sure that the way was open, before they finally came within bow shot of the camp. It was located in a grove of cottonwoods that lined the banks of a stream. The lodges showed distinctly in the light from the fires, but the trees made it difficult to see into the village.

"We must go closer," declared White Otter.

At that moment a dog began to bark, and they stopped in alarm. Had the dog caught their scent? Their hopes weakened at the thought. They listened, fearfully, expecting to hear the other dogs take up the challenge. Their fears, however, were not confirmed. The dog soon became quiet. The peril had passed.

"It is good," whispered White Otter. "We will go ahead."

They moved through the darkness as silently

as shadows, and approached close to the edge of the timber. Then they stopped. They were almost within leaping distance of the camp. They feared to advance nearer because of the dogs. Then White Otter suddenly thought of a way to overcome the peril.

"Come, my brother, we will climb into this big tree," he proposed. "Then we can see into the camp, and the dogs will not find us."

"It is good," said Sun Bird.

They climbed noiselessly into a large cottonwood, and went sufficiently high to obtain a splendid view of the Kiowa camp. The Kiowas were assembled about a large fire, and a warrior whom the Sioux took to be the chief was talking excitedly. In a few moments they recognized him. They had outwitted him several years before.

"Hi, I know that warrior—it is 'The Lame Wolf,'" laughed Sun Bird.

"Yes, I see who it is," replied White Otter.

A moment afterward they made a still more interesting discovery. They saw a number of ponies tied at one end of the camp, and among them they identified the piebald and the roan. They were tied before a lodge, and the Sioux

believed that the Kiowa who occupied it was the one who had taken the ponies from the Cheyenne camp.

"Pretty soon we will take them away," said Sun Bird.

White Otter kept still. He was searching the camp for Red Dog. The Cheyenne chief was not in sight. White Otter became alarmed. He wondered if the Kiowas had already killed their prisoner. The possibility staggered him. He fastened his attention upon the man who was addressing his people. He appeared to be telling them something important. They were listening with serious attention. The entire tribe seemed to have assembled at the council fire, for the Sioux saw men, women and children in the group. Then the speaker suddenly pointed toward one of the lodges, and the Sioux looked eagerly in the direction. A moment afterward the robe was drawn from the doorway of the lodge, and three warriors appeared. The Sioux instantly recognized one as Red Dog.

"Watch sharp!" said White Otter.

The appearance of the Cheyenne chief threw the Kiowas into a turmoil. They rose to their feet, and began to shout, and jeer, and threaten

their foe. The latter walked slowly forward between his guards. He was badly crippled and walked with difficulty, and the Kiowas laughed at his misfortune. Several boys followed behind him, mimicking his gait. The eyes of the Sioux flashed dangerously.

"I would like to kill those people," declared Sun Bird.

"Wait," White Otter said, grimly.

Red Dog was led to the council fire. The Kiowas immediately began to threaten him. They crowded closely about him, shouting and shaking their fists, but the Cheyenne appeared calm and fearless. Then the warrior whom the Sioux had recognized called out sharply, and the Kiowas fell back. A moment afterward he addressed the prisoner. The Sioux wondered if he was speaking in the Cheyenne dialect. Red Dog gave no indication that he understood him. When the Kiowa finally paused, and appeared to be waiting for a reply, the Cheyenne remained silent. The Kiowa laughed scornfully, and turned away. Then Red Dog was taken back to the lodge.

The Sioux felt greatly relieved. They believed that Red Dog would be spared for the night at least. The thought gave them hope. They be-

lieved that the following night they might be able to rescue him from his predicament.

"We have found out what we wished to know," said White Otter. "Come, we will go and tell the Cheyennes about it."

"Yes, we must get far away before the light comes," declared Sun Bird.

They were about to descend, when they suddenly heard voices. The speakers were approaching the camp. They were close to the tree in which the Sioux had concealed themselves. The latter waited anxiously for the prowlers to pass. They believed that they were scouts who had been watching on the plain. Then the voices ceased, and the Sioux became uneasy. They wondered if the scouts had gone. They watched to see them enter the camp. Long moments passed. The scouts failed to appear. The Sioux wondered what had become of them. Then they heard them talking directly beneath them. They had stopped at the tree. The Sioux wondered if they had been discovered. They feared to move. At last they heard the Kiowas passing on. A moment afterward they saw two warriors enter the camp.

"Now we will go," said White Otter.

They descended from the tree, and sped safely

into the night. Dawn was almost at hand when they finally found Little Raven.

"You have come—it is good," he said. "Did you find Red Dog?"

"Yes, we saw Red Dog in the Kiowa camp," White Otter told him.

"Did you see the ponies?"

"Yes, our ponies are in that camp," said Sun Bird.

"Hi, that is good," declared Little Raven.

"Did anything happen to you?" White Otter asked him, as they rode toward the Cheyennes.

"No, nothing happened to me," said Little Raven. "I listened sharp, but I did not hear anything."

CHAPTER XVI

A THRILLING RESCUE

HAVING crossed safely over the ridge where they believed the Kiowa scouts were watching, the Sioux rode desperately to reach the ravine before daylight. There was not a moment to spare. Dawn was flushing the eastern sky when they finally encountered the first Cheyenne scout. They stopped, and White Otter imitated the bark of To-ko-la, the little gray fox.

"You have come back—it is good," cried Painted Weasel.

"Yes, it is good," White Otter told him.

They ran the ponies toward the ravine. The Cheyennes were overjoyed at their safe return. They gathered eagerly about them to learn if they had reached the Kiowa camp.

"Cheyennes, Red Dog is alive," White Otter told them. "We saw him in the Kiowa camp."

"It is good, it is good," cried Running Crow. "My brothers, you have done a big thing."

The Cheyennes were beside themselves with

excitement. Their gloom vanished. Their hearts filled with hope. Having learned that their chief was alive, their one thought was to rescue him. They realized, however, that it would be foolhardy to make the attempt before night. The thought suddenly sobered them. The delay suggested alarming possibilities. They began to have doubts.

"Perhaps the Kiowas will kill Red Dog before the night comes," they told one another.

Aroused by the thought, some of the warriors made reckless proposals to attack the camp at once. The majority, however, talked against it.

"We must wait," Running Crow told them. "If we let the Kiowas see us, they will kill Red Dog before we can help him. I do not believe anything will happen to him before the night comes. Come, White Otter, you are the leader, tell us how you feel about it."

"My brothers, we must wait," declared White Otter. "I do not believe the Kiowas will kill Red Dog before the night comes. I will tell you how I feel about it. I believe the Kiowas are getting ready for a big talk. They will tell their people about the great fight. They will dance and sing the war songs. Then Red Dog will be in danger.

I believe they will bring him out to kill him. I do not believe they will do anything until it gets dark. Then we will be close to the camp. We will rush in and carry away your chief. Pretty soon I will tell you how I propose to do it. You must wait until I tell you about it. If you do anything foolish, Red Dog will surely die.

"Now I will tell you something different. My brothers, we found the ponies. The war ponies are in the Kiowa camp. The other ponies are outside with the Kiowa ponies. We will run off the ponies when we carry away Red Dog. This will be a big fight. I know that all of you are brave enough to go through with it. You must also be sharp. We must fool the Kiowas. Then they will not kill Red Dog before we get into the camp. I believe some scouts are still watching over there on that long hill. I believe they will go away before it gets dark. We must keep hiding in this place until they go away. Now I have told you what I have to say about it."

His words made a favorable impression upon the Cheyennes. They were convinced that his plan offered the only hope of saving Red Dog. They were eager to learn how he proposed to overcome the Kiowa camp without sacrificing the

life of the Cheyenne chief. White Otter showed no inclination to tell them.

"My brothers, White Otter is a great chief," said Running Crow. "A great chief does not tell what he is about to do. You must wait until it is time to go ahead with this thing. Then White Otter will tell us about it."

Day had dawned, and the sun was appearing above the plain. Most of the Cheyennes crept to the top of the ravine to watch for signs of the Kiowas. They wondered if scouts were still watching on the distant ridge. There was no way of learning.

The day was well advanced when the Cheyennes discovered a band of animals on the summit of the ridge. They studied them with eager attention. The distance made it difficult to identify them. Some thought they were ponies. White Otter and Sun Bird disagreed with them.

"He-ha-ka, elk," said the Sioux.

"Yes, yes, it is true," agreed Running Crow.

The animals were moving slowly along the ridge. Their appearance convinced the Cheyennes that the ridge was free of foes. They believed that the Kiowa scouts had returned to the village.

"The way is clear—it is good," said Running Crow.

"Perhaps they are watching close to the camp," White Otter told him.

Then he called Sun Bird and Little Raven into the ravine.

"My brothers, I have some words for you," he said. "Pretty soon the day will pass away. I have been watching for our people. Now I do not believe they will come in time to help us. Perhaps the Cheyennes took a long time to go to our camp. Well, we cannot wait. We must go ahead with what we came to do. Red Dog is our friend. We must try to help him. I am about to do a big thing. I will ask you to help me. There will be great danger. Perhaps we will be killed. You are Dacotahs. You are brave. I know you are not afraid to die."

"White Otter, I will go with you," said Sun Bird.

"Yes, my brother, I will go," Little Raven told him.

"It is good," declared White Otter. "Now I will tell the Cheyennes about it."

He asked Running Crow to summon his tribes-

men. They hurried into the ravine, and assembled before the Ogalala.

"My brothers, I have called you here to tell you what I propose to do," said White Otter. "The day has almost gone. Night is close by. We must get ready.

"Listen to my words. When we go to fight the Kiowas it would be foolish for all of us to go together. If we do that, the scouts will find out about it and tell their people. Then Red Dog will be killed before we get to the camp. There is only one way to do this thing. We must make three war parties. Now I will tell you about it. I am going to make Running Crow a leader. He must take some warriors and go away first. Running Crow and his brothers must circle far around and come up on the other side of the camp. I am going to make Standing Bull a leader. He must take some warriors and go away next. Standing Bull and his brothers must circle around and come up on the side where the ponies are. I am going to make Painted Weasel a leader. He must take some warriors and go away last. Painted Weasel and his brothers must ride straight ahead to the camp. All of you must send scouts ahead to watch for the Kiowas. You must watch sharp. If you

let them find you we cannot help Red Dog. When you all get close enough to shoot an arrow into the camp, you must wait. When Painted Weasel is ready he must make the cry of Ma-ya-sh, the wolf. Then Painted Weasel and Standing Bull must lead their brothers ahead. You must make a big noise. Standing Bull and his brothers must run off the ponies. Painted Weasel and his brothers must go to the camp.

"Now, Running Crow, listen sharp. When you hear that noise you must bring your brothers to the other side of the camp. Do not make any noise until you are close. Then rush ahead.

"While you are all doing these things, Sun Bird and Little Raven will go with me into the camp. We will try to save Red Dog and lead away the war ponies. You must come fast, my brothers, or the Kiowas will kill us. Each of you must do as I have told you to do. Now, my brothers, I will ask you how you feel about it.

"White Otter, you have given us great words," declared Running Crow. "I believe you have told us how to fool the Kiowas. You have asked me to be a leader. It is good. I will keep your words. Yes, my brother, I will do as you have told me to do."

"It is good," said White Otter.

"My brother, you are a great war leader," said Painted Weasel. "If we do as you tell us to do, I believe we will save Red Dog and run off many ponies. I will keep your words. I will lead my brothers close up to the camp. We will make a big fight. We will try hard to help you."

"It is good," White Otter told him.

"Great chief of the Ogalalas, I have listened to your words," said Standing Bull. "They are good. I believe it is the only way to do this thing. I will keep your words. I will lead my brothers to run off the ponies."

"It is good," said White Otter. "Well, my brothers, I see that you all feel good about this thing. It makes me feel big."

Having learned the plan of attack, the Cheyennes looked forward to the fight with enthusiasm. They crept up the ravine and watched impatiently for the day to pass. They glared fiercely into the east, and murmured boastful threats against the hated foes in the distant camp.

"Hi, hi, pretty soon we will show the Kiowas how to fight," they cried, savagely.

When the purple evening shadows finally settled upon the plain, the war leaders called the warriors

into the ravine, and began to select the men who were to accompany them. The Cheyennes watched with intense interest as Running Crow and Painted Weasel and Standing Bull went about making their selections. All were famous warriors who commanded the respect and admiration of their tribesmen, and the latter had little preference between them. Then White Otter suddenly called Running Crow.

"Running Crow, I believe Painted Weasel and his brothers will have the biggest fight," he said. "The Kiowas will run out that way when they hear the noise. Painted Weasel must take the most warriors. You will also have a big fight, because you must rush into the camp. You must take many warriors. Standing Bull will run off the ponies. I do not believe he will get into the fight. Standing Bull must not take so many warriors."

"It is true," agreed Running Crow. "I have told my brothers about it. Painted Weasel is calling the most warriors. Standing Bull has called only a few."

"It is good," said White Otter.

When the selections had finally been made, each war leader made a short, fiery address to his

warriors. Their words roused the fighting spirit of the Cheyennes. They made it plain that they hoped to wipe out the sting of their recent defeat and take full vengeance upon the Kiowas.

"My people are very mad," Running Crow told White Otter. "They will make a big fight."

Darkness had already fallen, and White Otter determined to reconnoiter the plain before the first war party left the ravine. He sent White Horse and Red Crane and Fighting Wolf and Sitting Bear to look for the Kiowas. White Horse and Red Crane advanced toward the distant ridge. Sitting Bear circled toward the north. Fighting Wolf rode toward the south. The Cheyennes waited anxiously for them to return. Sitting Bear came first. He said he had ridden far out over the plain but had heard or seen nothing of their foes. Then Fighting Wolf rode in. He, too, declared that he had failed to find the Kiowas. It was a long time before White Horse and Red Crane arrived. They said they had searched carefully along the ridge, but had failed to locate their enemies.

"It is good," said White Otter. "Now we are ready to go ahead. Come, Running Crow, call your warriors."

When Running Crow and his companions were ready to depart, White Otter addressed them.

"My brothers, you are going into great danger," he warned them. "Perhaps you will have a hard fight. Running Crow is a good war leader. He will take you into the Kiowa camp. Then you must try to save your chief. When you get away come here and wait for your brothers. Do what I have told you to do. Do not try to do anything different. Go, my brothers, Red Dog is waiting for you."

"White Otter, we will keep your words," Running Crow told him. "When we hear that great noise we will rush ahead."

"It is good," said White Otter.

They rode silently from the ravine, and cantered away toward the south. White Otter listened soberly as the hoofbeats of the ponies gradually died away. He knew that they were staking their lives on his ability as a war leader. He realized his responsibility. Failure meant death for Red Dog, disaster for the Cheyennes, and disgrace for him. He drove the thought from his mind.

"I will do this thing," he murmured, fiercely.

Standing Bull and his warriors were impatient, and eager to depart. White Otter held them back.

He waited until he believed that Running Crow and his companions were well on their way before he finally sent away the second war party.

"Standing Bull, you must run off the ponies," said White Otter. "There are only a few of you. Do not try to get into the fight. Keep the ponies going. Make a big noise."

"I will do as you tell me," replied Standing Bull.

After they had gone, White Otter called Painted Weasel.

"Painted Weasel, you are a brave scout and a good war leader," White Otter told him. "I have seen you fight the Pawnees. I have seen you fight the Kiowas. I know you are brave. That is why I made you the leader of this war party. You will have the hardest fight of all. You must follow us to the Kiowa camp. You must wait close by until we have time to get into the camp. Then you must give the cry of Ma-ya-sh, the wolf, and rush ahead. Make a great noise. Try to frighten the Kiowas. Perhaps you will find us at the edge of the camp. Perhaps the Kiowas will hold us in the village. You must try to help us carry off Red Dog."

"White Otter, you are my friend," replied

Painted Weasel. "I have seen you do some big things. All of these warriors know about you. They will be very brave because you are here. I will keep your words. We will fight hard to get Red Dog out of the camp."

"It is good," said White Otter. "Come, my brothers, we will go."

They mounted the ponies and rode from the ravine. Then they cantered slowly across the plain. White Otter and Painted Weasel rode in front. Sun Bird and Little Raven followed close behind them. Then came the gallant Cheyenne fighting men. They rode along in grim silence. When they had crossed the second ridge, White Otter stopped them.

"Now, my brothers, we must leave you and go ahead," he told Painted Weasel. "Hold back until we have time to reach the camp. Then go ahead. Be cautious. Now send some one with us to hold the ponies."

Two young Cheyennes rode forward to join the Sioux. Then White Otter led his little company toward the Kiowa camp. They soon saw the camp-fires flickering between the trees. When they drew nearer they suddenly heard sounds which aroused their fears. The Kiowas were

shouting and beating the war drums. White Otter listened uneasily.

"It is bad," he said. "The Kiowas are dancing and singing the war songs. Red Dog is in danger. There is little time."

They rode faster. When they finally came within bowshot of the camp, White Otter stopped and dismounted. Sun Bird and Little Raven also dismounted. Then they left their ponies with the Cheyennes, and hurried away. They kept farther to the southward than they had gone the previous night, for White Otter was anxious to conceal himself nearer the center of the village.

"Now, my brothers, I will tell you what to do," he said, softly. "When we get to the edge of the camp, we will look for Red Dog. Then we will look for the war ponies. I will ask Sun Bird to go with me to help Red Dog. I will ask Little Raven to creep into the camp and lead out the ponies. Now we will go ahead."

The plain was shrouded in darkness, and they crept to the border of the camp without being discovered. Then they looked upon their foes. The Kiowas were seated about a great fire in the center of the village. They had ceased dancing, and were listening to a warrior who appeared to

be relating some thrilling experience. The Sioux felt sure that he was describing the battle at the Cheyenne camp. They took little interest in him, for their one thought was to discover Red Dog. He was not in sight. They felt relieved. They were within a few bow lengths of the lodge into which he had been taken the previous night.

In the meantime, Little Raven had discovered the Dacotah ponies. They were tied before a lodge, a short distance on his left. He touched White Otter and pointed toward them. White Otter nodded understandingly. Little Raven crawled away into the darkness.

A moment afterward the Kiowa finished his boastful tale, and received a noisy ovation from his people. The Sioux smiled. Then another warrior rushed into the circle and drove his tomahawk into a painted post near the fire. The Sioux were familiar with the ceremony. They knew that the Kiowa claimed a coup for some daring feat which he had performed in the fight with the Cheyennes, and was about to tell his tribesmen of his valor. As the speaker drew the attention of the Kiowas, White Otter seized the opportunity to creep closer to the lodge in which he hoped to find Red Dog. When he was within a bow length

of it, he stopped and placed his lips to the ear of Sun Bird.

"I believe Red Dog is in this lodge," he whispered. "I am going to creep up behind it. Follow me."

They crawled cautiously forward until they were at the rear of the lodge. Then White Otter placed his ear at the bottom of the lodge cover, and held his breath to listen. All was still. He signaled to Sun Bird. He, too, lay close to the ground and listened. In a few moments he shook his head. He had heard nothing. They believed that Red Dog was alone in the lodge. The thought filled them with joy. The warrior was still telling his boastful tale. The Kiowas were silent. The Sioux believed their opportunity was at hand. They drew their knives and began to cut the lodge cover from the stakes which held it to the ground. Then they were suddenly interrupted by the shrill neighing of a pony somewhere at the other end of the camp. The warrior ceased speaking. The Kiowas cried out excitedly. The Sioux turned to each other in dismay.

"Run around the other side of the lodge!" cried White Otter.

They separated and circled the lodge. Two

warriors were coming out with Red Dog between them. The Sioux shot their arrows, and the Kiowas fell. Before the people in the camp realized what had happened, White Otter had reached the Cheyenne chief and freed his arms. Then he drew him toward the edge of the camp. The Kiowas rushed forward. Sun Bird fought desperately to hold them back.

Then the cry of Ma-ya-sh sounded from the plain. The Kiowas stopped in alarm. A moment afterward the night rang with a wild din that filled their hearts with terror. They heard their foes advancing on three sides of the camp. For an instant they crowded together in panic. Then the warriors ran for the ponies. They heard them thundering across the plain. They saw a dim, shadowy form dash into the camp and disappear with the Sioux war ponies. Then they heard the Cheyennes yelling at the edge of the village. The Kiowas rushed forward to drive them out. At that instant another company of horsemen entered from the opposite side of the camp. The Kiowas became demoralized and fled wildly before their foes. The Cheyennes swept into the camp.

"Come, my brothers, here are the ponies," cried

Little Raven, as he joined his comrades at the border of the village.

The three warriors who had waited with the ponies had already come forward. Red Dog mounted and raced away to lead his warriors. The Sioux followed close behind him. The Kiowas had abandoned the camp, and were fleeing across the plain. The Cheyenne victory was complete. They had overcome their foes without losing a man.

CHAPTER XVII

DISASTER

WHEN the Cheyennes finally returned to the ravine they found Standing Bull and his companions awaiting them with a great herd of ponies. Among them were the fast war ponies which the Cheyennes had liberated from a corral at the end of the Kiowa camp.

"White Otter, we have done what you asked us to do," said Standing Bull.

"You are a good leader," White Otter told him. "See, my brothers, we have brought back your chief."

"Hi, hi, here is Red Dog!" Standing Bull cried, delightedly.

It was the signal for a great ovation to the Cheyenne chief. His warriors gathered about him with wild enthusiasm. Their piercing yells echoed shrilly across the plain, and put new terror into the hearts of the fleeing Kiowas. Then the guards with the ponies called out and warned the Cheyennes that the frightened animals were threatening to stampede.

"Be quiet, be quiet!" shouted Running Crow. "You have frightened the ponies."

The Cheyennes heeded the warning and became quiet. A few moments afterward Red Dog addressed them.

"My brothers, first I will tell you about these brave Dacotahs," he said. "When the Kiowas came to kill me, the Dacotahs shot their arrows through them, and gave me my life. Then White Otter pulled me away. Sun Bird fought back the Kiowas. Little Raven took away the Dacotah ponies. It was a great thing to do. Dacotahs, my heart feels big. You saved me from the Pawnees. Now you have saved me from the Kiowas. My people will talk about it a long time.

"Now, Cheyennes, here are some words for you. You were very brave. You came to that camp and fooled the Kiowas. You chased them out of their lodges. You made them run like rabbits. The Kiowas killed our people, but you killed many Kiowas. The Kiowas took our ponies, but you got them back, and took away many Kiowa ponies. Now we feel different in our hearts."

"Red Dog, I will tell you who brought your people to that camp to help you," said Running Crow. "White Otter brought them. He was the

leader. He told us how to fool the Kiowas."

"White Otter is a great chief," replied Red Dog.

"White Otter, my people want you to give them some words," said Running Crow.

"Cheyennes, you have done a big thing," White Otter told them. "You were very brave. Running Crow, and Painted Weasel and Standing Bull are good war leaders. All of them did what they set out to do. That is how your chief, Red Dog, happens to be alive. Cheyennes, I will tell you that my brother, Sun Bird, was very brave. He fought back many Kiowas, while I was helping Red Dog. Cheyennes, I will tell you that my brother, Little Raven, was very brave. He crawled into the Kiowa camp and led out our ponies. Hi, my brothers, we feel good to get back those ponies. Now Red Dog has come back to you. He must be the leader. I have finished."

The Cheyennes remained at the ravine until daylight, and then as they saw nothing of the Kiowas they set out toward the north. They rode away in buoyant spirits, laughing, and shouting and singing the war songs. As usual, scouts rode ahead and along either flank. The warriors rode in pairs with Red Dog and White Otter in the

lead. The men in charge of the ponies followed close behind the war party. The Cheyennes had little fear of pursuit, for they had thoroughly demoralized the Kiowas and taken away most of their ponies.

"They will not follow us," laughed Red Dog.

Although they felt secure from the Kiowas, the Cheyennes realized that there was a possibility of encountering the Pawnees. Having found them upon their hunting grounds, they felt quite certain that the Pawnees would keep a close watch. They believed, however, that the latter were farther toward the west, and they hoped to avoid them.

"We will watch out," said Red Dog.

The warriors in charge of the captured ponies were having considerable difficulty in holding them together, and the war party was forced to travel slowly. It disturbed them, for they were eager to withdraw from the Pawnee hunting grounds as soon as possible. They knew that the Pawnees were constantly moving about the plain, and they feared that some sharp-eyed scout might discover them. In that event they felt quite certain that the large herd of ponies would tempt the Pawnees to make an attack.

Half of the day had passed before they discovered anything to make them suspicious. Then they saw one of the scouts racing toward them. They stopped to wait for him.

"It is Turns Around," said Red Dog. "I believe he has found something bad."

In a few moments Turns Around reached them. He rode directly to Red Dog. They talked earnestly. Then Red Dog called out to the Cheyennes. They looked anxiously toward the west.

"Turns Around says he saw a warrior over there," Red Dog told White Otter. "He says he believes the warrior was a Pawnee. He says he believes the warrior saw him. He came back to tell us about it."

"It is bad," White Otter said, soberly. "If that warrior saw Turns Around, perhaps he will follow him and see us."

"It is true," replied Red Dog. "Well, we must keep going ahead. We cannot travel fast. We must keep with the ponies. They are holding us back. It is bad. I will feel good when we get away from this place. Now I am going to send Turns Around, and Sitting Bear over there to watch."

"Perhaps that scout will circle around and get behind us," suggested White Otter.

"Yes, I am thinking about that," said Red Dog. "I will send Black Beaver, and Fighting Wolf back there to watch."

Red Dog told his plans to the Cheyennes. The scouts immediately rode away. At the same time the war party continued toward the north. Red Dog sent a number of warriors to assist in keeping the ponies in order. Then the Cheyennes attempted to make better speed.

"Perhaps that warrior is a hunter," Red Dog told White Otter, hopefully. "If he is a hunter I do not believe he will try to follow us."

White Otter was silent. The discovery of the solitary rider had made him suspicious. Having encountered the strong force of Pawnees farther to the westward, he feared that they were still roaming about the plain. If one of their scouts came in sight of the Cheyennes, he believed there would be a fight. He realized that it would be difficult to escape without abandoning the ponies, and he knew that the Cheyennes would be unwilling to make that sacrifice.

They heard nothing further from the scouts until late in the day, and then Black Beaver over-

took them. His announcement caused considerable excitement. White Otter believed that the Cheyennes were alarmed. Red Dog had left him, and was talking seriously with Running Crow.

"My brother, I believe the scouts have seen the Pawnees," Sun Bird told White Otter.

"Something bad has happened," said White Otter.

Then Red Dog galloped up beside him. He appeared uneasy and troubled. The Sioux asked no questions. In a few moments, however, Red Dog told them what Black Beaver had said.

"Black Beaver says he saw three wolves peeping over the top of some rocks," said Red Dog. "He says they did not look right. He asked Fighting Wolf about it. Fighting Wolf said they did not look right. Then they went away. Our brothers rode ahead. They kept looking back. They did not see anything. Then they rode over a little hill. Then Fighting Wolf held the ponies, and Black Beaver ran back to watch. He peeped over the hill, and saw two warriors riding away toward the Place-where-the-sun-sleeps. Then he saw a wolf peeping over the rocks. Then Fighting Wolf stayed there to watch, and Black Beaver came to tell us about it. My brothers, it is bad.

I believe the Pawnees have found out about us. Come, White Otter, you are a great war leader, tell me what you make of it."

"It looks bad," White Otter told him. "I believe what you say is true. I believe the Pawnees know about us."

"Well, if they know about us, they will bring a big war party to run off these ponies," declared Red Dog.

"I do not believe those scouts know about the ponies," said Sun Bird. "Perhaps they are only trying to find out who we are. We are going away. Perhaps they will not try to follow us."

"I believe they will follow us," declared White Otter.

"Well, there is only one thing to do," Red Dog told them. "We must get away as fast as we can. We are not afraid of those Pawnees, but we must not lose the ponies."

"Those are good words," said White Otter.

Fearful that they were being followed, the Cheyennes surrounded the ponies and lashed them into a sharp gallop. It was impossible to hold them together. They soon scattered, and some broke from the herd and raced wildly across the

plain. The Cheyennes rode furiously to turn them back.

"It is useless," they cried. "We cannot run them so fast."

Black Beaver had already turned back to join Fighting Wolf. The day was far gone, and the Cheyennes believed that if they could avoid an encounter before dark, they might be able to throw the Pawnees from their trail under cover of the night. The thought encouraged them. They ran the ponies at a brisk pace, and kept a sharp watch behind them. Then they saw Turns Around and Sitting Bear approaching from the west. When they reached the war party they told Red Dog that they had seen nothing more of the solitary rider.

"It is good," said Red Dog. "Perhaps it was a hunter. I believe he has gone away."

At that moment, however, the Cheyennes heard shouts behind them. Looking back in alarm, they saw Black Beaver and Fighting Wolf racing after them. They were lashing their ponies and riding at a furious pace.

"Watch out, I believe the Pawnees are close behind them!" cried Red Dog.

"Run the ponies! Run the ponies!" cried the scouts. "Many Pawnees are coming!"

The two riders had barely reached them when the Cheyennes saw a great company of horsemen ride over a hill. They knew at once that they were Pawnees. When the latter discovered the herd of ponies they began yelling excitedly. They raced across the plain at break-neck speed, and the Cheyennes realized that they would soon be overtaken.

"Come, we will ride back there and fight them off," proposed several young warriors.

"No, no," cried Red Dog. "Stay where you are. We must keep together and try to hold the ponies. Keep them running. Stay on all sides of them. Do not fight until the Pawnees try to rush in. Perhaps they will be afraid to come close."

The Pawnees were gaining with each stride of the ponies, and the Cheyennes knew it was hopeless to attempt to escape. Aware that an encounter was inevitable, they had surrounded the ponies, and were prepared to fight off their foes. The Sioux rode together at the head of the herd.

"It looks bad," said Sun Bird. "The Chey-

ennes made a big fight to get these ponies, but I believe the Pawnees will run them off."

"We must fight them back," White Otter told him.

"See, see, they are trying to get ahead of us," cried Little Raven.

The Pawnees had suddenly separated, and were moving forward along the flank of the war party. The Cheyennes instantly guessed their plan.

"They are going to ride around and close us in!" cried Red Dog. "Come, stop the ponies, and make a circle!"

They made desperate attempts to stop the ponies, but the wild yells of the Pawnees had frightened them into a panic and they were beyond control. They were running madly, but the Pawnees were passing on both sides of them. Another company of foes were closing in from the rear. The Cheyennes at the rear of the herd turned about and drove them back with a fierce volley of arrows. Then the Pawnees who had passed began to close in ahead of them. The Cheyennes saw the danger.

"Come, Cheyennes, follow me!" cried White Otter.

He raced forward, and a number of Cheyennes

left the ponies and followed him. Sun Bird and Little Raven rode close beside him. White Otter raised his voice in the war cry and rode straight at his foes. His reckless courage roused his companions, and they charged savagely upon the surprised Pawnees and swept them from the path.

"Follow the Sioux! Follow the Sioux!" cried Red Dog.

The Cheyennes lashed the ponies into a wild burst of speed. The Pawnees began to shoot their arrows. They charged within short bow-range and made a furious attack upon the riders along the edge of the herd. A number of Cheyennes fell from their ponies. Their companions instantly closed the gap, and drove the riderless ponies into the herd. Then they sent a deadly shower of arrows against their foes. The Pawnees dropped behind their ponies for protection, but the Cheyennes brought many of the ponies to the plain.

"Yes, yes, kill the Pawnee ponies!" cried Running Crow.

At that moment, however, the entire company of Pawnees charged recklessly upon the herd. The Cheyennes fought valiantly, but they were greatly outnumbered, and the Pawnees soon broke

through them. Once past the guards they rode wildly into the herd, yelling and waving their arms. The terrorized ponies scattered like a covey of frightened grouse, and fled across the plain. The Pawnees raced after them.

"Come, we must catch them!" Running Crow cried, fiercely.

"Wait," shouted Red Dog. "The Pawnees are too strong for us. They are near their camp. If we follow them many more warriors may come to help them. It is useless to throw away our lives. If we let the Pawnees kill us, what will become of our people? We must hold back. We are not strong enough to fight them."

"Red Dog, your words are good," declared White Otter. "It is useless to throw yourselves away."

CHAPTER XVIII

REENFORCEMENTS

THE Cheyennes were disheartened by the loss of the ponies. They rode across the plain in gloomy silence. Having rallied from the catastrophe which had fallen upon their village, they were completely disheartened by the fresh disaster which had overtaken them.

"It is bad," said Running Crow. "The Evil Ones must be working against us."

The credulous Cheyennes were impressed by the thought. It deepened their gloom, and filled them with superstitious dread. Their recent misfortunes suddenly assumed a new significance. They believed that they had aroused the displeasure of the Evil Ones. The idea startled them. They feared that still greater calamities might befall them.

As the disastrous day finally came to its end, they approached a familiar camp site beside a large pool on the open plain. It was the only water within a half day's travel, and as the plain

offered splendid pasturage for the ponies Red Dog determined to stop. Some of the warriors were eager to pass by, and continue the retreat from the Pawnee hunting grounds.

"No, it would be foolish," Red Dog told them. "We must stop here and rest the ponies."

The Cheyennes slid dejectedly from the ponies, and threw themselves upon the ground. They held the lariats, and watched indifferently while the ponies grazed. There was little talk. Their hearts were heavy. Their spirits were crushed. A splendid victory had ended in a bitter defeat. A number of their comrades had been killed. The Cheyennes felt subdued.

"Our brothers feel bad," Little Raven said, softly.

"Bad things have happened to them," declared Sun Bird.

White Otter made no comment. He, too, was serious and depressed. He had expected a war party of his people to come to the aid of the Cheyennes. He was at a loss to explain why they had failed to appear. Having assured the Cheyennes that the Ogalalas would help them, he feared that they might doubt the sincerity of his pledge. The thought troubled him. He felt sure

that if his tribesmen had joined the war party, the Pawnees would have been beaten off.

"My people did not come," he told Sun Bird. "It is bad. I do not know what to make of it."

"Perhaps the Cheyennes took a long time to go to your village," said Sun Bird. "There were many women and children. They held back the warriors."

"Many suns have passed," White Otter reminded him.

They became silent. For a long time they sat watching the plain. White Otter looked hopefully toward the north. He knew that the Pawnees were two full days' travel from their village, and they would be forced to travel slowly with the great herd of ponies. If the Ogalalas should appear before the night passed he believed they might still overtake the Pawnees and recover the ponies. The possibility thrilled him. Then, as darkness finally came, the great hope died from his heart.

"My brothers, night has come," Red Dog told his warriors. "I do not believe the Pawnees will turn back to find us, but we must watch out. We are in the country of our enemies. I will ask

some of you to ride out on the plain and watch."

"I will go," White Otter said, eagerly.

"White Otter, you are a great chief," Red Dog told him. "You have done big things to help us. You must lie down and rest. My young men will watch."

"No, no, I will watch," insisted White Otter. "Perhaps something good will come of it. Red Dog, you must listen to my words."

"I will not talk against it," said Red Dog.

"I will go," replied White Otter.

"I will go with you," said Sun Bird.

"No, my brother, I must go alone," White Otter told him.

A few moments later four scouts left the company, and disappeared into the night. One was White Otter. He rode away toward the north.

"I believe White Otter has gone to watch for his people," Little Raven told Sun Bird.

"It may be true," said Sun Bird.

Once beyond hearing of the Cheyennes, White Otter struck the piebald with his riding quirt, and the wonderful creature bounded away at marvelous speed. He rode far into the north before he finally came in sight of a dense cluster of trees. They were several arrow flights away. He

stopped the piebald, and listened sharply. All was still.

"It is bad," White Otter murmured.

He rode slowly toward the timber. Then the piebald suddenly stopped and raised its head. White Otter peered eagerly into the darkness. A moment later a pony called. It was within bow-shot. White Otter drew his arrows, and waited in trying suspense. The piebald was restless. He believed that some one was approaching. Then he heard voices. They were close by. He imitated the bark of the little gray fox. The sounds subsided. He listened anxiously. Many moments passed. Hope gave way to suspicion. Had he betrayed himself to his foes? The possibility startled him. Then he heard an answer to his signal. The bark of the little gray fox sounded a short distance ahead of him. His eyes flashed. His heart bounded with joy.

"Ho, Dacotahs," he cried, eagerly.

"Ho, my brother, come ahead," some one replied.

"My ears tell me who you are, but I must be cautious," said White Otter. "Come, Ogalala, tell me your name."

"Black Moccasin," said the voice.

"It is good," cried White Otter.

He rode forward, and met the famous Ogalala scout. They cantered toward the trees.

"Have you fought the Kiowas?" Black Moccasin inquired, anxiously.

"Yes, we went to their village and took away Red Dog and many ponies," White Otter told him.

"Well, we came fast, but I see that we did not get here in time to help you," said Black Moccasin.

"My brother, you must help us fight the Pawnees," replied White Otter. "The Pawnees came up with us and ran off the ponies that we took away from the Kiowas. That is why I came to find you."

"Hi, hi, that is bad," said Black Moccasin.

At that moment some one challenged them.

"It is good, my brother," cried Black Moccasin. "White Otter is here."

"Ride ahead," the scout told them.

They advanced and met Hollow Bear, another noted Ogalala warrior. He accompanied them to the grove. White Otter was overjoyed to find a great company of Ogalalas assembled at the campsite. With them were the five Cheyenne scouts who had accompanied the women and children to

the Ogalala camp, and the company of warriors who had escaped from the Cheyenne village. White Otter was welcomed with enthusiasm.

"My brothers, I have found you—it is good," he said. "There is little time to talk. First I will tell these brave Cheyennes that Red Dog is alive. We took him away from the Kiowas. We also ran off many ponies. Come, Cloud Eagle, you know my words, tell your brothers about it."

The Cheyennes were wild with joy. It was some moments before White Otter could proceed with his talk.

"Now, Cheyennes, I will tell you something bad," he said, finally. "We were driving away those ponies. Everything was good. Then the Pawnees came. They were very strong. They caught up with us and ran off those ponies. We could not stop them.

"Ogalalas, we must ride after those Pawnees and try to get back those ponies. The Pawnees are not far ahead of us. I believe they stopped when it got dark. Their village is two sun's travel away. They cannot travel fast. I believe we can come up with them. I will lead you. Come, jump on your ponies, and follow me."

The warriors ran to untie the ponies. A few

moments afterward they followed their famous young war chief across the plain. It was a great war party. Wolf Robe, the venerable Ogalala chief, had sent his best fighters to aid the Cheyennes. White Otter thrilled at the thought of leading them against the Pawnees.

"White Otter, how did you come to find us?" Black Moccasin asked curiously.

"I knew about that place—it is a good place to stop," White Otter told him. "When Red Dog stopped over there by the water I kept watching to see you. You did not come. I felt bad. Then it got dark. Then I said, 'Perhaps my brothers are close by.' Then I thought about that place. I said, 'Perhaps my brothers are waiting there until it gets light.' Then I came ahead to find out about it."

"Are the Cheyennes far away?" Black Moccasin asked him.

"No, we will soon find them," said White Otter.

He led the way at a fast pace, for he was eager to set out on the trail of the Pawnees without further delay. When they finally approached the spot where he had left the Cheyennes, White Otter raced forward in advance of the war party.

"Watch out, some one is riding fast!" the

Cheyennes cried in alarm, as they heard a pony galloping toward them from the north.

"It must be White Otter," said Red Dog. "Perhaps he has found out about something."

They sprang to their feet, and waited anxiously for the rider. As he came within bowshot, they began to call.

"Who are you?" they inquired, suspiciously.

"Do not be afraid, everything is good," cried White Otter.

"Yes, yes, it is White Otter," the Cheyennes told one another.

A few moments afterward the Ogalala joined them. They gathered around him to learn what had happened.

"Listen!" he cried. "Do you hear those ponies? They are bringing my people. Cheyennes, my words have come true. The Ogalalas are coming to help you."

They heard the hoofbeats of many ponies. The sound filled them with joy. A great hope entered their hearts.

"It is the Ogalalas! It is the Ogalalas!" they cried, excitedly.

Then the great Sioux war party dashed out of the night. Their arrival threw the Cheyennes

into a tumult. For a moment all was confusion. Then White Otter took command, and restored order.

"Come, come, my brothers, we are making too much noise," he said, sharply.

The great company of fighting men instantly became quiet. They dismounted and waited for instructions from their chief.

"Cheyennes, my people have come here to fight," White Otter said, proudly. "We will ride after the Pawnees. We will bring back those ponies. A Dacotah does not turn back. We will do what we set out to do. Cheyennes are you ready to go into this fight?"

"Yes, yes, we are ready!" shouted the Cheyennes.

"It is good," declared White Otter.

"Wait, Ogalalas, I will give you some words," said Red Dog. "I have talked with Cloud Eagle and Two Dogs and Walks Alone and Hairy Robe and Lame Bear. Those warriors took our women and children to your village. They gave me good words. Now I know that our people are safe in your lodges. Now I know that they will have plenty to eat and a good place to sleep in. Now I know that our people will stay with you until

we fight the Pawnees and bring back the ponies. It is good. Ogalalas, you have good hearts for your friends. The Cheyennes feel good about it. We will always try to help you.

"Ogalalas, your great chief, Wolf Robe, is too old to fight, but he has sent you here to help us. It is good. Now we are strong enough to fight the Pawnees. White Otter says that a Dacotah does not turn back. It is true. The Dacotahs are very brave. Well, the Cheyennes will keep close beside you.

"Ogalalas, White Otter, your chief, is a great leader. He took me away from the Kiowas. He was the leader. He told my people how to get into that camp. We did what he told us to do. Everything was good. All my people came out of that fight. It is something to talk about. Cheyennes—Ogalalas—listen to my words. I am going to ask White Otter to be the leader of this great war party. He is as brave as Ma-to-ho-ta, the bear. He is as sharp as To-ka-la, the fox. He fooled the Kiowas. I believe he will fool the Pawnees. If White Otter is the leader, I believe we will get back those ponies. Now you all know how I feel about it."

His proposal was approved by the entire com-

pany. The Cheyennes believed that the young war chief of the Ogalalas possessed some mysterious power which made him immune from peril, and enabled him to triumph over his foes. They believed that his leadership greatly increased their chances for a victory over the Pawnees. The Ogalalas were equally certain of success.

"I will be the leader," said White Otter. "Now we must get away. Pretty soon the light will come. There is little time. Come, Red Dog, send some one to call in the scouts. Then we will ride away."

Red Dog sent several riders to find the three Cheyenne scouts who were watching on the plain. Then the Cheyennes gathered about the warriors who had escaped from the Cheyenne camp to learn the details of the disastrous battle with the Kiowas. It was not long, however, before they were interrupted by the arrival of the scouts. They said that they had watched carefully but had heard nothing of their foes.

"It is good," said White Otter. "Come, my brothers, get on your ponies. We will go to fight the Pawnees."

CHAPTER XIX

THE PAWNEES AT BAY

AWARE that each moment was precious, White Otter rode through the night at a desperate pace. Behind him thundered the great war party of Sioux and Cheyennes. Beside him rode Red Dog, the Cheyenne chief, and Black Moccasin, the famous Ogalala scout. Convinced that they would see nothing of the Pawnees until they finally came up with them, White Otter saw little need for caution. He believed that the Pawnees had stopped for the night, to rest the ponies, and he was eager to cover as much distance as possible before daylight.

The Ogalalas were enthusiastic at the idea of an encounter with their old-time enemies, the Pawnees. They knew from experience that the hated "Wolf People" were brave and stubborn fighters, but they felt confident of victory. They followed gayly after their leader, talking, and laughing and chanting their war songs. Behind them came the Cheyennes. Their gloom had vanished. Their confidence was restored. The war-

riors who had returned with the Ogalalas had greatly strengthened their numbers, and with the formidable Dacotahs for allies they believed that success was assured.

"Pretty soon it will be light," said White Otter. "Then we will send scouts to find the tracks of the ponies. We will follow them until we come up with the Pawnees."

"While the foolish Pawnees are sleeping, we are rushing closer," laughed Red Dog.

"Perhaps they kept going ahead," said Black Moccasin. "Perhaps they were afraid some one would follow them."

"No, I do not believe it," declared Red Dog. "They saw that we were not strong enough to fight them. They do not expect any one to follow them."

"They cannot keep running those ponies," White Otter told them. "They must stop to rest."

At dawn White Otter became more cautious. He stopped the war party and made known his plans.

"The light has come, we must look for the Pawnees," he said. "I am going to send out some scouts to find the tracks of those ponies.

I will send Sun Bird, and Little Raven, and High Eagle. Now, Red Dog, you must send three of your people with my brothers."

"It is good," said Red Dog. "I will send Running Crow, and Painted Weasel and Standing Bull."

"Now, my brothers, I will tell you what to do," said White Otter. "I will ask Sun Bird and Little Raven to go ahead. I will ask the rest of you to ride out on both sides of us. Look hard until you find the tracks of those ponies. I believe they are close by. If you find them, make the signal. We will keep watching. If we find those tracks, we will make the signal. Perhaps scouts are watching on the high places. Look out for them."

The six scouts went away. Then the war party rode ahead. Eager to prevent the Pawnees from increasing their lead, they rode at a stiff pace. It was not long before they saw Standing Bull riding rapidly in a circle, some distance to the westward.

"It is good," said White Otter. "Standing Bull has found the tracks. We will go over there."

Standing Bull and Painted Weasel had found

the trail of the Pawnees. A close examination of the tracks convinced White Otter that the Pawnees were traveling at a moderate pace.

"They made those tracks before the last sun went away," he said.

"It is true," agreed Black Moccasin.

"Call the scouts," said White Otter. "Then we will go ahead, and find out where the Pawnees stopped."

They saw one of the scouts approaching from the east. The fact that he was alone made them suspicious. They believed that his companion had remained to watch something. As the rider came nearer they saw that it was High Eagle, the Ogalala.

"We saw some people far away toward the Place-where-the-day-begins," said High Eagle. "Three were on ponies. They rode ahead. Four were on foot."

"Which way are they going?" inquired White Otter.

"They are going straight ahead—the same way we are going," High Eagle told him. "They are far away. Running Crow is watching them."

"I believe those people are Kiowas," said White Otter. "We chased them far away. Now

they are going back to their village. We will not think about them."

"Yes, yes, it must be the Kiowas," laughed Red Dog.

"High Eagle, we have found the tracks of the Pawnees," said White Otter. "We are going to follow them. Go back there and bring Running Crow."

When they learned that the scouts had discovered a small company of Kiowas, some of the Cheyennes were eager to ride away in pursuit of them. White Otter immediately objected. He realized that the maneuver would cause delay and confusion, and might betray them to the Pawnees.

"No, you must not go over there," he said. "You must keep going ahead to catch the Pawnees. If you hold back they will get to their village. Then it will be hard to run off the ponies. I am the leader. You must do as I tell you."

Red Dog repeated the message to the Cheyennes, and they dismissed the Kiowas from their thoughts. They knew that White Otter and his warriors were risking their lives to help them, and they were eager to obey his commands. Then they saw High Eagle and Running Crow riding to join them. Sun Bird and Little Raven, however,

had failed to appear. White Otter felt little fear for their safety. He believed that they were scouting carefully in advance of the war party in an effort to locate the Pawnees.

"Pretty soon they will come," he told Red Dog.

A few moments afterward they rode over a low ridge, and saw the two Minneconjoux scouts. They were waiting at a grove of cottonwoods. The war party raced forward to join them.

"Here is the place where the Pawnees stopped," said Sun Bird, as White Otter approached.

"Yes, I see where the ponies were feeding," replied White Otter.

He believed that the Pawnees had remained at the spot until daylight. In that event he realized that they could not be very far ahead of him. He hoped to come in sight of them before the end of the day.

"We must go on," said White Otter.

They galloped away on the trail. It led directly toward the south. As they advanced the plain became rough and broken, and there were many low knolls and ridges. White Otter realized that it offered splendid protection to hostile scouts, and he became more cautious.

"Come, Sun Bird, ride ahead and keep watching the high places," he said. "I will ask Little Raven to go with you. Follow the tracks of the ponies. We will ride behind you."

The Minneconjoux galloped away. The war party rode easily until the scouts were a long way ahead. Then they again raced their ponies at high speed in the hope of soon overtaking the Pawnees.

As the day advanced and they failed to see anything of their foes, some of the warriors feared that they would be unable to overtake them before they reached the great Pawnee camp. The thought discouraged them. White Otter, however, was still hopeful of coming up with them. He felt sure that he was steadily gaining upon them, and he expected to see them before the end of the day. Red Dog, too, was confident that they would come in contact with the Pawnees before nightfall.

"Hi, hi, I believe our brothers have found them!" Black Moccasin cried, excitedly.

The Minneconjoux were riding in a circle on the top of a low hill. The war party rode toward them with high hopes.

"What has happened?" White Otter inquired, anxiously.

"We saw two riders over there on that next hill," said Sun Bird. "They went away very fast. I believe they were Pawnee scouts."

"Did they see you?" asked White Otter.

"Yes," replied Sun Bird. "They must have been peeping over that high place. We looked sharp, but we could not see them. When we went up that hill we saw them riding away. They kept looking back. Then we rode here to call you."

"It is bad," said Red Dog. "They will tell their people about us. Now it will be hard to catch them."

"Well, my brothers, there is no use of talking about it," declared White Otter. "There is only one thing to do. We must rush ahead and try to catch the Pawnees before they get away."

"Yes, that is the only thing to do," said Black Moccasin.

They raced ahead at top speed. They had gone only a short distance when they saw a small company of horsemen sweep into view over a near-by rise of the plain. They stopped at sight of the war party. Then they turned and raced toward the south. They appeared to have been thrown into a panic. White Otter and his war-

riors rode after them with the fierce eagerness of wolves in sight of game.

"Those warriors came to find us, but they found something different," laughed Little Raven.

"Their people must be close by," declared White Otter.

The Pawnees had disappeared behind the ridge. When the war party reached it, they saw them still riding furiously toward the south. They had lost considerable ground, however, and White Otter felt encouraged.

"We will come up with them," he told his companions.

"Yes, yes, we are closing in," said Red Dog.

They heard the scouts whooping fiercely, and they believed that they were attempting to warn their tribesmen. Then they discovered a great smother of dust rising in the distance. They realized that they had come in sight of the Pawnees.

"Come, come, ride faster!" cried White Otter.

They forced the ponies into a terrific pace. They were steadily gaining upon the four scouts. The latter were making frantic efforts to escape.

"Pretty soon we will catch those riders," White Otter declared, grimly.

At that moment, however, the Pawnee scouts turned toward the east. White Otter instantly detected the clever ruse.

"Do not follow them," he cried. "They are trying to lead us off. Keep after the ponies."

Then they swept over a rise of the plain, and saw the Pawnees and the ponies directly ahead of them. They were a long distance away, however, and were riding desperately. They appeared to have the great herd of ponies under complete control, and White Otter realized that the chase threatened to be a long one.

"They are far ahead of us," he said, soberly.

Having actually sighted the Pawnees, the war party was determined to overtake them. Forcing the ponies to a killing pace, they began to gain upon their foes. Stride by stride they overcame the lead of the Pawnees until the latter were barely two arrow flights away. Then the Pawnees lashed the ponies into a furious sprint, and held off their pursuers. The wild race across the plain became a test of endurance between the rival ponies. Both companies of riders knew that the gallant little beasts must eventually collapse, but each hoped that their foes would be the first to weaken. The ponies appeared to be well matched,

however, and the exhausting chase continued.

The Pawnees were approaching a long, straggling line of trees that reached far across the plain. White Otter knew that the timber marked the course of a stream. He rode wildly to overtake his foes before they reached it. Once they crossed the water he realized that it would be difficult to reach them, and still more difficult to secure the ponies. His efforts were useless, however, for the Pawnees held their lead. They were still safely beyond arrow range when they finally forced their gasping ponies across the stream, and came to a stand in the timber along the bank. White Otter pulled up the sweating piebald. The long pursuit had come to an end. The Pawnees had placed a formidable barrier between them and their foes. For the moment, at least, they were safe from attack.

"Now I know why they did not stop to fight," White Otter said, bitterly. "They were trying to get to that place. Now they are there. It is bad."

"Well, we made them stop," declared Red Dog.

"Yes, we kept them from getting to their camp," said Black Moccasin. "Now we are close.

They cannot get away. Pretty soon we will go over there and run off the ponies.''

''My brother, that will be a hard thing to do,'' White Otter told him.

CHAPTER XX

A HARD WON VICTORY

WHITE OTTER and his warriors approached within bowshot of the stream. Then they sat upon their tired ponies, and stared silently across at the Pawnees. The latter were in sight among the trees. They had driven the captured ponies from the timber, and were herding them upon the open plain. Less than a third of the company guarded them. The rest of the Pawnees were watching along the bank of the stream.

"Perhaps those warriors will try to hold us back while their friends get away with the ponies," Red Dog declared, suspiciously.

"I believe that is what they propose to do," said Black Moccasin.

"No, I do not believe it," White Otter told them. "Those ponies have come a long ways. They have run fast. The Pawnees will let them rest. When it gets dark perhaps they will try to take them away."

"I believe what White Otter says is true," declared Sun Bird.

The Pawnees had gained the advantage. White Otter realized that an attempt to cross the stream might result in heavy loss. He determined to wait until he had carefully studied the possibilities. Both the Ogalalas and the Cheyennes, however, were eager to make an attack. The Pawnees were jeering, and daring them to cross the stream.

"Hi, you Dacotahs, are you afraid to follow us through the water?" some one called, mockingly. "You came here to help the Cheyennes. Why are you holding back? Have we frightened you? Go back to your lodges and sit with the old women. Perhaps they will tell you how to fight."

The taunt roused the Ogalalas into a frenzy. They were wild with rage. Some of them rode recklessly to the edge of the stream. Many of the Cheyennes followed them. White Otter warned them against attempting to cross.

"Stop!" he cried. "The Pawnees are trying to catch you. Are you going to throw away your lives? The Pawnees are like Zi-ca, the squirrel. They make a big noise, but they hide behind the

trees. They are trying to make you mad. If you ride into the water, they will kill you with their arrows. Come, my brothers, turn back. Shake the words of the Pawnees from your ears."

The Ogalalas saw the wisdom of his words. They lingered a moment or so, shouting boastful threats against the Pawnees. Then they turned back. The Cheyennes accompanied them. The Pawnees laughed fiercely.

A moment afterward a ringing shout sounded farther along the stream. The Pawnee scouts had crossed, a long distance to the eastward. They were riding to join their tribesmen.

"Those Pawnees feel very brave," laughed White Otter.

The day was passing, and White Otter realized that he must decide upon a plan of action. He left High Eagle and a small company of scouts to watch the Pawnees, and then he led the war party beyond earshot of their foes. He called a council, and asked Running Crow to act as interpreter.

"My friends, we must find out the best way to run off those ponies," he said. "When it gets dark we must be ready to do something. Now I will tell you how I feel about it. I believe the

Pawnees will try to send away those ponies. They will try to fool us. We must be sharp. I will tell you what I propose to do. If any of you feel different about it, you must talk against it.

"Now, my brothers, listen sharp. I believe there is only one way to get those ponies. When it gets dark we will send scouts along the water. They must follow along the water until they find a good place to go across. Then they must go across, and watch the Pawnees. If the Pawnees try to run off the ponies, the scouts must make the signal. After those scouts go away we will make two war parties. Our brothers, the Cheyennes, will keep together. Red Dog will be the leader. My people will keep together. I will be the leader. One war party must stay here. One war party must go toward the Place-where-the-day-begins. Then that war party must circle around and cross over the water. Those warriors must run off the ponies. The war party that stays here must go straight ahead to fight the Pawnees. Then we will be on two sides of them. Now I have told you how I feel about it."

"My brothers, you have heard the words of a great chief," said Red Dog. "White Otter is the

leader. I will do as he proposes to do. I believe it is good."

"Cheyennes, I believe White Otter has told us the best way to fight the Pawnees," said Running Crow.

"My friends, White Otter is a great war leader," declared Black Moccasin. "He has led his people in many battles. If we do as he tells us to do, I believe we will get back those ponies."

Many more warriors indorsed the plan of the Ogalala chief. No one spoke against it. Having led them to a splendid victory over the Kiowas, the Cheyennes felt confident that he would be equally successful against the Pawnees.

"Well, my brothers, I see that there is no one to talk against this thing—we will go ahead with it," White Otter told them. "Now I will call out the names of the scouts who must go to watch the Pawnees. I will call my brother Hollow Bear, and I will call Standing Bull. Hollow Bear is an Ogalala. Standing Bull is a Cheyenne. Both of them are great warriors. Now I will tell you about those war parties. I see that there are more Ogalalas than Cheyennes. The Ogalalas must fight the Pawnees. The Cheyennes must

try to get the ponies. Come, Red Dog, tell me how you feel about it."

"It is good," agreed Red Dog.

Having decided upon the plan of attack, the war party again approached the stream. High Eagle and his companions said that the Pawnees had made no attempt to leave the timber. White Otter felt sure that they, too, were waiting to attempt some bold bit of stratagem under cover of the night. The thought made him suspicious, and watchful. He saw nothing which would give him a clew to the intentions of the Pawnees.

As the light slowly faded from the plain the Pawnees began to sing their war songs and shout fierce threats against their enemies. The Ogalalas and the Cheyennes listened in silence. The threatening flash of their eyes, however, betrayed the wrath that blazed in their hearts. They waited for darkness, and the opportunity to rush upon their foes.

In the meantime Hollow Bear and Standing Bull had ridden away on their perilous mission. They went a considerable distance toward the north before they finally turned to the eastward. Then they made a wide detour and approached the stream. They waited a long time at the edge

of the water, listening for sounds from their foes. As they heard nothing to alarm them, they rode cautiously into the stream. They reached the opposite side in safety, and moved out upon the plain.

Soon afterward Red Dog and his warriors arrived at the stream, an arrow flight from the place where the scouts had crossed. They, too, stopped to listen. All was quiet. The Cheyennes, however, waited beside the water. They were listening for the signal which would warn them that the Ogalalas had begun the fight.

"My brothers, the scouts have gone," White Otter told the Ogalalas. "I believe they are across the water. Red Dog and his brothers have gone. I believe they are waiting for the signal. Everything is ready. We must begin the fight. I will ask you to be brave. Drive back the Pawnees and get to the ponies. Red Dog and his warriors will come to help us. Keep close around the ponies. Drive them across the water. Are you ready?"

"Hi, hi!" cried the Ogalalas.

"Come!" shouted White Otter.

At that moment they heard the thunder of hoofbeats across the stream. A piercing shout rang

through the night. It was a warning from the scouts. Then the wild yells of the Pawnees sounded from the edge of the water. The Ogalalas realized what had happened.

"They are running off the ponies!" cried White Otter. Follow me!"

The Ogalalas raised the great Dacotah war cry, and rode boldly into the stream. They heard Red Dog and the Cheyennes farther to the eastward. The Pawnees began to shoot their arrows. The Sioux sent a volley into the timber. Then they lashed their ponies forward, and charged recklessly upon their foes. The Pawnees held their ground, and offered desperate resistance. The Sioux, however, were thoroughly aroused, and they fought with a sullen ferocity that made them irresistible. The Pawnees finally gave way, and raced across the plain in pursuit of the ponies. The Ogalalas kept close behind them. They heard the Cheyennes whooping fiercely, and they believed that they had overtaken the herd.

"Hi, hi, the Cheyennes are making a big fight!" the Dacotahs cried, excitedly.

When they were within arrow range of the ponies, the Pawnees turned and fought savagely to hold them back. For a moment the Sioux were

halted. Then they rallied, and swept forward in a ferocious attack that completely overcame their foes. A moment afterward they were at the rear of the herd.

In the meantime Red Dog and his tribesmen had raced ahead of the Pawnees, and were attempting to turn the ponies. Once at the front of the herd, they rode wildly among the Pawnees and drove the frightened ponies from their course. Whooping, and lashing furiously with their heavy riding quirts, they gradually forced the ponies toward the east. The Pawnees attacked them with great bravery, but the Cheyennes beat them off. Then a company of Ogalalas raced along the flank of the herd and came to the assistance of their allies.

"Turn the ponies—run them to the water!" they cried.

They soon gained control of the herd and raced the ponies toward the stream. The Pawnees had no thought of yielding. Infuriated by the success of their foes, they fought valiantly to regain possession of the ponies.

"Hold them off, hold them off!" shouted White Otter.

While Red Dog and a company of Cheyennes

rode ahead to drive aside the Pawnees, the rest of the war party surrounded the herd. The Pawnees found it impossible to reach the ponies. They rode close up to their foes and fought with reckless courage, but each time they were driven off.

"Hi, the Pawnees are brave," Sun Bird told White Otter.

"Yes, they are making a great fight," acknowledged White Otter.

When they finally reached the timber the ponies attempted to turn aside, and in a moment the herd was thrown into wild confusion. The Pawnees were quick to seize the opportunity. Yelling fiercely, they dashed forward like a pack of mad wolves, and attempted to cause a stampede.

"Come, Cheyennes, drive the ponies into the water!" cried White Otter. "Ogalalas, hold back the Pawnees!"

Then the Sioux and the Pawnees fought a thrilling hand-to-hand encounter, while the Cheyennes made frantic attempts to drive the unruly ponies into the timber. Wild with panic, the frenzied beasts plunged, and reared, and kicked in their efforts to break through the circle of riders that surrounded them. At last the Cheyennes lashed

them into submission and drove them forward. They plunged down the bank, and floundered wildly across the stream. Then the Cheyennes raced them away into the north.

"Hi, my brothers, some of us must go back there, and help our brothers, the Ogalalas," said Red Dog, when they were several arrow flights from the stream.

Then they heard the Dacotah war cry ringing through the night. Soon afterward White Otter and his gallant fighters overtook them. They were in high spirits.

"Where are the Pawnees?" inquired Red Dog.

"They are running to their lodges," laughed White Otter.

"White Otter, you are a great chief," declared Red Dog. The Ogalalas are as brave as Ma-to-ho-ta, the bear. We will go to your village, and tell your people what you have done. Yes, we will give some ponies to your chief, Wolf Robe."

"It is good," replied White Otter.

Then he called Sun Bird and Little Raven to ride beside him. It was a long time before he spoke.

"My brothers, we have done what we set out to do," he said, finally. "It was a great fight.

Many brave warriors were killed. I will not talk about it. You were very brave. You have helped me to do a big thing. Sun Bird, I saw you drive back many Pawnees. Yes, you were always in the fight. Little Raven, I saw you fight off three Pawnees. Yes, I saw you do some big things. My brothers, I will tell your great chief Curly Horse about you. I will tell him that you did big things to help my people."

"White Otter, your words make me feel good," said Sun Bird. "You came to our lodges and went with us to fight the Blackfeet. Now we have helped you fight the Pawnees. It is good. We are Dacotahs. A Dacotah will fight for his brother."

"It is true," declared Little Raven.

THE END

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